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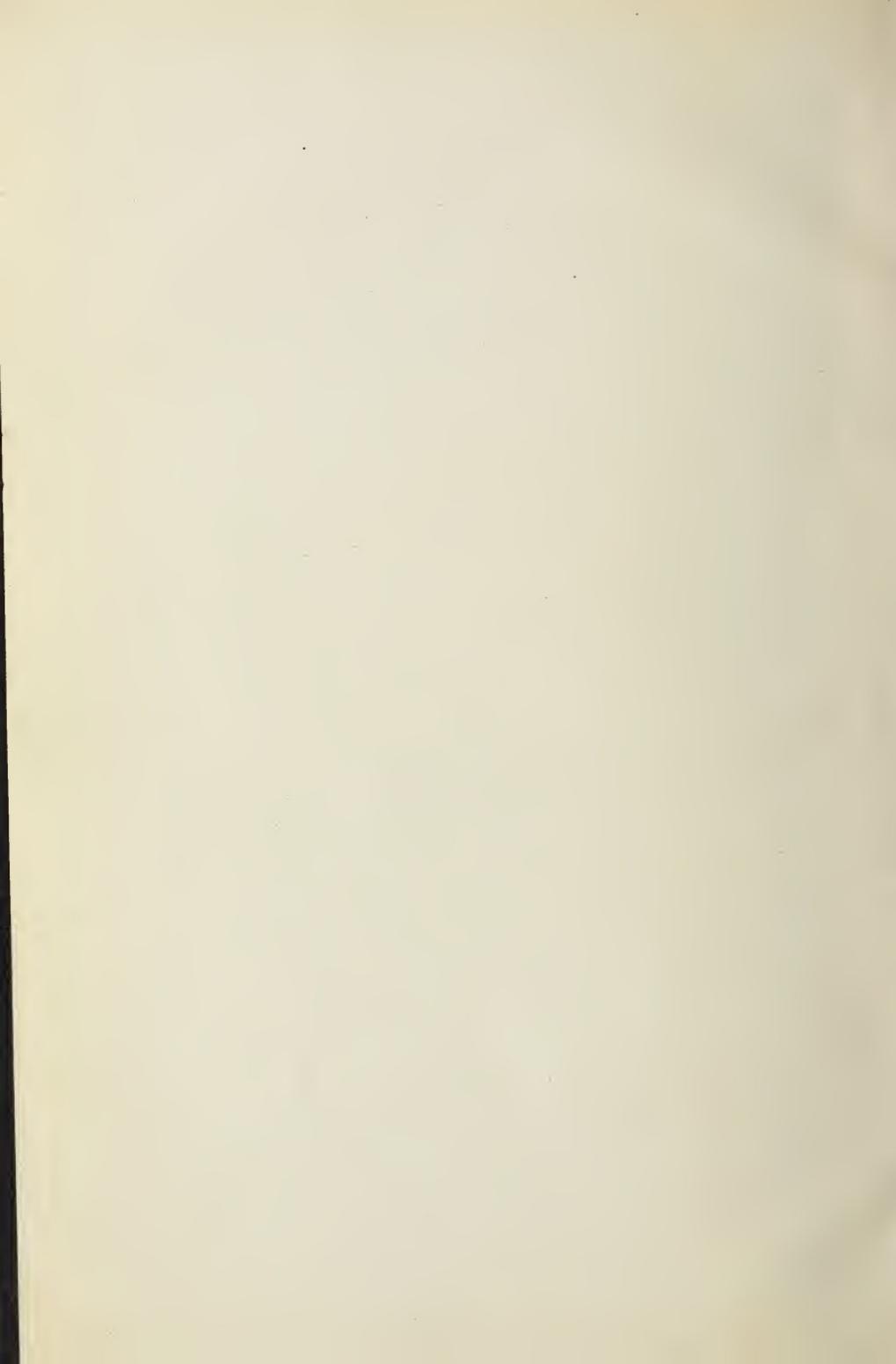
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J. M. Mclear.

HOPES THAT PERISH AND OTHER SERMONS.

BY

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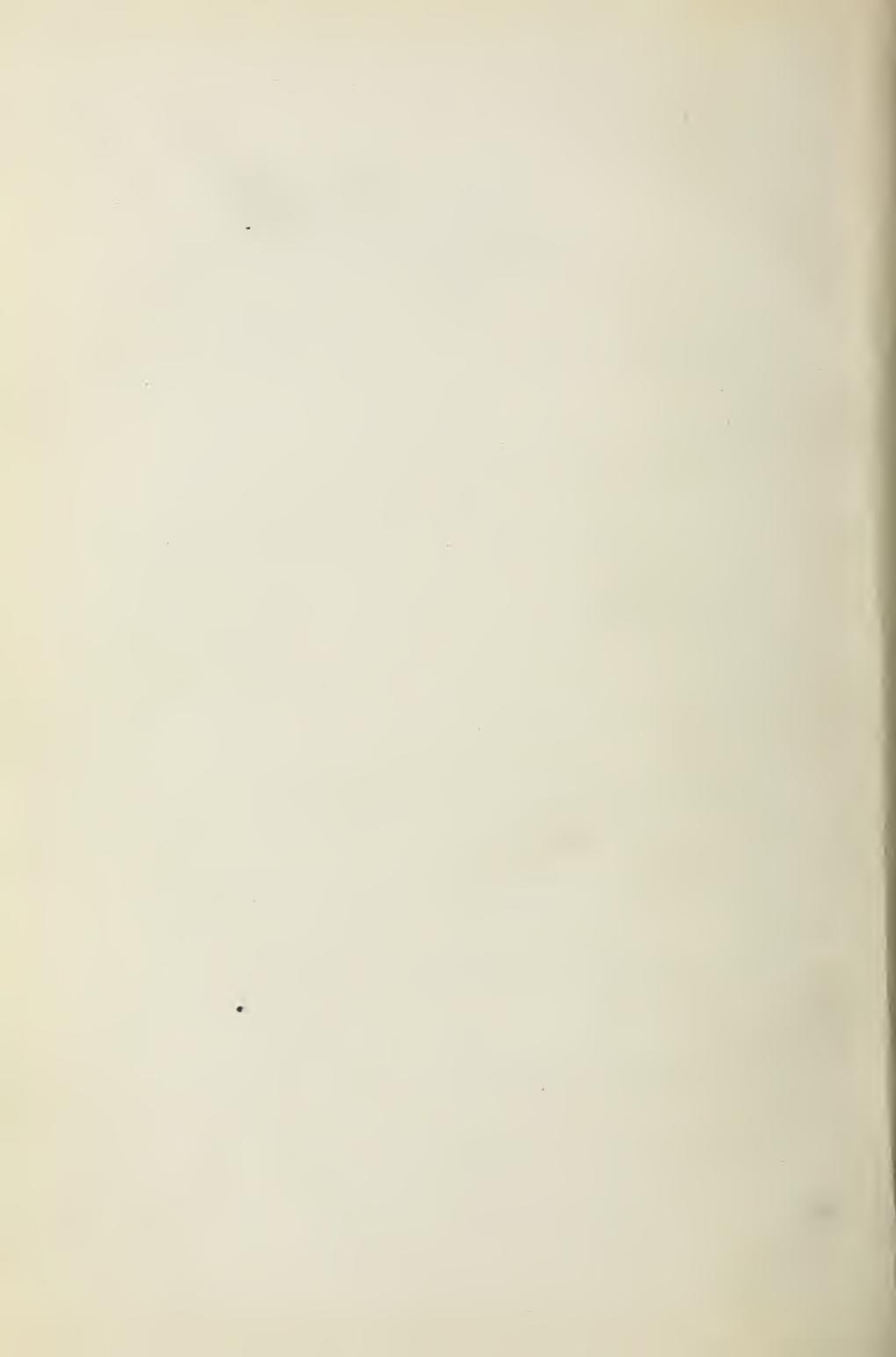
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TO
THE MEMORY
OF MY LITTLE FRIEND,
JAMES ROBINETTE,
WHO SPENT FIVE HAPPY YEARS IN THIS WORLD,
THEN WENT
TO SPEND ETERNITY IN HEAVEN,
THIS VOLUME
IS LOVINGLY DEDICATED BY THE
AUTHOR.



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HOPES THAT PERISH.

I.

"My hope is perished."—Lam. iii, 18.

Very few, if any, reach heaven with all their expectations realized. With the dew of life's early morning upon our brow, full of youthful buoyancy, we cut our cables, give our streamers to the wind, little dreaming that the sea upon which we have embarked will be ruffled by any storm. For awhile hope sings her sweetest song, the gentle breezes waft us toward some fair island sparkling in radiant beauty like a gem of richest hue; but before we reach its pearly shore, the calm zephyrs madden into furious blasts, our frail bark is caught in the teeth of the driving wind, and it may be that only on broken pieces of the ship we shall get safe to land. That was Paul's experience, when, with his two hundred and seventy-five men, he had weathered the storm for fourteen weary days and starless

nights. Then, with mast and mainsail gone, the cargo thrown over to lighten the ship, they cast four anchors out of the stern and longed for day. When the gray dawn of the morning came, they took up the anchors, and loosening the rudder bands and hoisting the mainsails to the wind, they made toward the shore. Falling into a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground. The fore part stuck fast, and remained immovable, but the violence of the waves broke the hinder part, and the soldiers' counsel was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim out and escape. But the centurion, who wanted to save Paul, kept them from their purpose and commanded that those who could swim should cast themselves into the sea, and get to the shore. And the rest, some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship, escaped safe to land. No matter then, if we are capsized in mid-ocean, if on a broken spar we can get safe home. For, once we have gained the fair haven, our song will be sweeter than the anthem of those who may have had little to hinder them. This thought is beautifully expressed by Mark Guy Pearse, who says: "There is a salvation, a full salvation, which we dream of and long for—as when a

stately ship comes into the harbor, every stitch of canvas set and filled with the kindly evening breeze, the white foam flashing back from her bows; the heavens all splendid with the sunset hues, the blue sea stretching away to where the dear ones wait to welcome us; and beyond the creeks, whence rise the overhanging woods that stretch away to the purple hills. There is such a salvation, it may be, for some—all sunny calm, all lovely peace, where the very winds and waves just wait with ready service. And yet it may be that among those who reach the heavenly home there are some whose song will be sweeter than that which these can sing—a song of victory over peril; a triumph the more rapturous for their struggle.”

Again, what often seems to be a blight upon our hopes is but the gentle dew of God’s tender love, preparing them for fuller bloom. I have tried to regard in this light, the early death of the dear little boy to whom this volume is lovingly dedicated. I think the saddest hour of my life was that Christmas morning, when, standing beside the casket containing his silent form, I looked down upon his beautiful white face and realized that he was dead. But two days had passed since

he had gone to God. While going, he saw the mist of sorrow gathering in the eyes of his fond parents, and putting one hand upon the trembling lips of the weeping mother, the other upon those of the grief-stricken father, he said: "Don't, both of you," and fell asleep. God had taken him! But why could he not live? He was a child of unusual promise, with wisdom far beyond his years, it seemed to me. Why could not the sweet dream of his loving parents, and that of a host of admiring friends, be realized? The only explanation is, that death interrupts nothing. The Master needed him.

"Death gazed at the flowers with tearful eyes,
He kissed their drooping leaves;
It was for the Lord of Paradise
He bound them in his sheaves.

"My Lord hath need of these flow'rets gay,'
The Reaper said and smiled;
Dear tokens of the earth are they
Where he was once a child.

They all shall bloom in fields of light,
Transplanted by My care,
And saints upon their garments white,
Those sacred blossoms wear."

Another shock which made me silent, occurred while a student at the University. My room was

one hundred and fourteen, while that of a young gentleman friend was one hundred and fifteen. He complained one day of a slight indisposition, but no one thought of anything serious. The next day he is in his place at the recitations. At night, after an hour or two of study, he retires. The next morning he does not rise. The best medical skill is employed, but to no avail. One evening just after the sun had gone down in the west, he sank away into the arms of death.

He was preparing for the ministry, but before he could deliver his God-given message, He who presides over the general conference of the first born, had given him an appointment nearer the throne. His earthly hopes perished, but his study at the University was not in vain. He is finding ample opportunity to use his trained powers. He is preaching still.

By our imperfect knowledge we can only partially understand what God does. "We know in part." Thank God for the little we do know! With John Greenleaf Whittier we know:

"That more and more a Providence
Of love is understood,
Making the springs of time and sense
Sweet with eternal good:—

That death seems but a covered way
Which opens into light,
Wherein no blinded child can stray
Beyond the Father's sight:—

That care and trial seem at last,
Through memory's sunset air,
Like mountain ranges overpast
In purple distance fair:—

That all the jarring notes of life
Seem blended in a psalm,
And all the angels of its strife
Slow rounding into calm.

And so the shadows fall apart,
And so the west winds play;
And all the windows of my heart
I open to the day."

We know also, that all things work together for good to them that love God. We ought, therefore, to thank Him for every experience of life. We do thank Him for the bright things; for the joys, and for the flowers. Let us be thankful for the thorns.

"I thank Thee more that all our joy
Is touched with pain;
That shadows fall on brightest hours;
That thorns remain;
So that earth's bliss may be our guide,
And not our chain.

And afterwhile, at eventide,
It will be light.
And as you then shall view the past,
All will be right;
For God sends naught within these days
For which thou shalt not give Him praise."

Sometimes He sanctifies us by the baptism of sorrow. Our withered hopes are put away under the flowers. Our loss is a great one, and yet we were never so rich, since God is anointing us for holier service.

I am sure we can not study the life of that heroic missionary, Mary Reed, and not realize how much of God she saw in everything.

She came home in 1890 to rest, and discovered that she was a leper. Then she planned to go to Pithora and spend her life among the lepers of India. I shall let one who traveled with her tell the story.

"Here and there we held sweet hours of communion, and I, who had been accustomed to see missionaries seeking America in feeble condition, could not refrain from asking if it was right for her to return to India at an unfavorable season, before her health was established. Her lips quivered, but her gentle, pleading voice grew steady as she replied: 'My Father knows the way I go, and I am sure it is the right way.'

"It was in Paris that she said one evening, 'If I thought it was right, and you would promise never to speak of it until you heard it in some other way, I should tell you my story.' I told her if aught in me inspired her confidence, that was the surest safeguard of her secret.

"On memory's walls there will hang, while time lasts for me, the picture of that scene. A wax taper burned dimly on the table beside her open Bible—that Book of all books, from whose pages she received daily consolation; and while, without, Paris was turning night to day with light and music and wine, within, Mary Reed's gentle voice, faltering only at her mother's name and coming sorrow, told the secret of her affliction.

"As my throbbing heart caught its first glimpse of her meaning I covered my face to shut out the swiftly-rising vision of her future, even to the bitter end, and almost in agony I cried out, 'O, not that! Do not tell me that has come to you!'

Some of the fondest hopes of Mary Reed, turned their sweet faces to the wall and died, but with a faith that murmurs not, she sings:

"No chance has brought this ill to me,
'Tis God's sweet will so let it be,
He seeth what I can not see.

There is a need be for each pain
And He will make it some day plain,
That earthly loss is heavenly gain."

Amid the broken hopes of life, how comforting are the words of Isaiah: "He hath sent me to heal the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified."

A lady was playing upon a piano before a small company of friends, when an eminent professor of music entered the room. She was greatly embarrassed at his presence and struck a false note. Before it ceased to vibrate, he sprang to the instrument, and touching the key, changed the discord into a beautiful harmony. Often the music of life is pitched on a minor key, and we hear so many discordant notes till we are about to believe there is no harmony. But our great Teacher, sweeping His matchless fingers over life's jangling notes, brings forth the sweetest strains from

broken chords. And when the path leads through burning deserts where hopes perish, He shall be "as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." And when the storms are raging, and we are ready to give up in despair, He will come treading down the angry waves, saying, "Peace be still," and there shall be a great calm. He understands our sorrow and invites us to cast our burden upon Him, with the promise that we shall be sustained.

Miss Fiske, the renowned Nestorian missionary, was delivering an address to the heathen gathered in the little chapel. She was in poor health and sat upon a mat while talking. Presently she felt a woman's form at her back and heard a voice saying, "Lean on me." She let her arm rest gently upon her friend, and the woman said, "Lean hard, if you love me, lean hard." So Christ says, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." We may pillow our weary head upon the bosom of divine consolation and hear His voice saying, "Lean hard, if you love me, lean hard."

When Napoleon the Great was on his way to Russia, people stood patiently for days and nights to see him pass; and it is related of a minister in

the north of Scotland, that he walked all the way to London to see the Duke of Wellington. But One greater than Napoleon, and mightier than the "Iron Duke," is passing by—Jesus of Nazareth. When Napoleon and Wellington passed many who had traveled for miles could not get close enough to see the distinguished generals, and in turn were not seen by them. But when Jesus comes, He is accessible to every one, and marks with keenest interest the condition of all. He sees the blinding tears and knows how the heart aches.

"Be quiet, soul. Thy Master knows
Thy trying day,
And in the midst of pain and tears
I hear Him say,
I love thee still; cast all thy care
Upon thy Lord, and leave it there."

Oh, I would be willing to be the blind beggar and sit in darkness and hunger, if Jesus would pass by. I know He would bring the morning with Him and enable me to see its light. For when in my distress I cried, "Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me," He would put at my disposal all the power of God, for He would ask, "What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?"

Let me have a word here with those, who, realizing the truth of the text in their own experience, feel utterly discouraged. They are asking, "How can we ever take up the burdens of life again?"

This question may find an answer in the following illustration:

When a great battle was being fought, the general ordered a young officer to charge and take the most destructive battery crowning a hill. The task appalled him. He looked toward the place where the order would take him. He saw the heavy siege guns of the enemy firmly fixed and belching forth death. Then turning to the general he said, "I can go, sir, if you will give me the grasp of your all-conquering hand." The grasp was given and the officer rode bravely away to execute the command. Oh, discouraged soul, if you can feel the pressure of the all-conquering hand that was nailed to Calvary's cross, it will thrill you through and through, nerve you to any conflict and crown you in the end with a glorious victory.

Finally. What we lost during our mortal life, we shall regain when we enter upon life immortal.

"I watched the white sails as they spread
Their wings, like birds set free;
And some o'er distant waves will glide,
Some in the wished-for haven bide,
And some be lost at sea.

And thus, upon life's changeful main,
While Hope sang merrily,
Full many a barque from off the strand
We launched with eager heart and hand,
Nor dreamt of loss at sea.

But were their treacherous rocks and shoals
All, all unknown to thee?
It matters not—the heart doth know
That cruel storm hath sunken low
The venture out at sea.

Mayhap it was no costly freight,
Tho' rich to you or me;
And memory, as the days go by,
Still counteth o'er with tearful eye
Her treasures lost at sea.

Ah, well, there is a haven sweet
Where shipwreck cannot be;
Sad hearts, who sit in patient pain,
There shall ye gather back again
Much that was lost at sea."

II.

ALTRUISM.

"Bear ye one another's burdens."—Gal. vi, 2.

The basal principle of monasticism is the inherent evil of matter; and that contact with people diverts the mind from religion. Accordingly the only safe course is for man to withdraw himself from society, and thus isolated he might find a place for self-denial. In its first stage there was no movement toward a separate order. The next stage was the plan of living in certain localities where the monks dwelt close together. The third stage was the organization of orders such as the Benedictines and other fraternities. The monks took three vows: perpetual fidelity to the life and order; obedience to the head of the monastery; and chastity and poverty. But while monasticism teaches that man must separate himself from society, altruism holds that a religion which keeps man aloof from man is at

variance with every idea of the gospel. This altruistic principle repeats the cry of another's sorrow, and makes his burden felt upon our shoulders.

Drummond says: "To move among the people on the common street; to meet them in the market-place on equal terms; to live among them not as a saint or monk, but as brother-man with brother-man; to serve God not with form or ritual, but in the free impulse of a soul; to bear the burdens of society and relieve its needs; this is the religion of the Son of Man."

I.

To exercise this spirit, we must recognize human weakness.

There is nothing which a man is more likely to do than to commit sin. That is our nature. "The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." We are carnal, sold under sin. There are many theories of "Original sin." Pelagianism affirms that Adam's sin could not affect the race in any way beyond the influence of a bad example. Others tell us that the relation of Adam to his posterity is that of identity; that is, Adam is

the race. Again, it is said that he is a representative of his race, and still again, that he is the father of his race.

Our own church teaches that "original sin standeth not in the following of Adam, but is the corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and of his own nature inclined to evil, and that continually." But we need not stop to reason on this question. The terrible fact that sin is here is admitted. It is also too sadly true that men are sinning against God and conscience and light; therefore, we are to remember the weakness of humanity, and when our brother is overtaken in a fault, restore him in the spirit of meekness. But we must confess with shame that this is not always done. When that young convert yielded to the tempter and wandered in forbidden paths, did we say that we had expected nothing else? or did we tell him of the Christ who is married to the backslider, and who yearns after the wayward with an infinite tenderness? Many a person has been saved by a little interest shown at the right time. It may be that it was only a hand-shake that did it, for I have read of such an

instance. It occurred in a little prayer meeting. The minister was shaking hands with those present, two of whom, a married couple, he had never seen before. More than a year passed, when that family invited him to call on particular business. He went, and after the usual salutation, the wife showed him an elegant dressing-gown and told him it was for him. Then she said,

"Do you remember the first evening my husband and I entered the little chapel, and how you came around and shook hands with us. Well, that hand-shake saved me from suicide, and this is a small expression of gratitude I feel to him who saved my life." The minister's interest was thoroughly aroused and at his request she told the story of her husband's wicked life, and how habits grew worse, until, in despair, she had determined to end her sorrow. Then she thought of God and said to herself, 'I will go to the little chapel and see if there is any ray of hope shining there.' To her surprise her husband consented to go with her. It was in this agony of soul she took her seat, and the warm grasp of the minister's hand lifted her into a new life.

"If any little word of mine
May make a life the brighter,

If any little song of mine
May make a heart the lighter,

God help me speak the little word,
And take my bit of singing,
And drop it in some lonely vale,
To set the echoes ringing!

If any little love of mine
May make a life the sweeter,
If any little care of mine
May make a friend's the fleeter,

If any lift of mine may ease
The burden of another,
God give me love, and care, and strength
To help my toiling brother!"

II.

The Gospel forbids that any man should limit his service to himself.

The warmth of the sun, the perfume of the flowers, the fruit of the trees, are for others.

The life Christ lived was for others. That is why He lives to-day. He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. He went about doing good, and thus immortalized His name. He sought the poor to make them rich, the sad to comfort their aching hearts. He took upon Himself the form of a servant, and thus, like an all-pervading leaven, He is felt throughout christen-

dom. When His disciples were clamoring for prestige, He told them that the greatest should be servant of all.

We are told that the pyramids of Egypt were built by those ambitious to be perpetuated in history. Are they remembered? No. Those crumbling stones have never whispered their names. But look at the woman who anointed the Saviour. Wherever the gospel is preached her loving devotion to Christ is her memorial.

"The struggle that's only for self,
No joy among angels may wake;
But the brightest of crowns will be given
To those who have struggled and striven
For somebody's sake."

"We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me." He tolerates no serfdom. In the presence of His cross there is no spiritual isolation. Life becomes broad and complex. The sorrows of others mantle us in darkness; their joys bathe us in sunshine.

The best way to serve God is to help man. This thought finds illustration in an image in the Cologne cathedral, representing a giant with a child upon his shoulders. The giant is Offero, the man searching for a master, and this is the story: Offero resolved to serve only the mightiest. Accordingly he was employed by an earthly king and served him faithfully, until the name of Satan was mentioned, and the king trembled. "Why art thou frightened, O king?" he asked. "Because Satan is mightier than I." Then Offero enlisted in the service of Satan, and one day while they were traveling, came to the cross-roads, where they beheld a cross. Satan refused to pass on. "Why art thou afraid?" asked Offero. "Because this Christ rules in heaven and is mightier than I." Then Offero sought for Christ. He was told that if he would do good as he had opportunity, Christ would reveal Himself. So the giant built a house on the bank of a river, and one stormy night he heard a voice calling, "Offero, come and carry me over." Crossing the stream, he found a child, and taking it upon his shoulders stepped into the water. Having reached the other shore he put down his burden, when Christ stood before him and said, "Inas-

much as ye did it unto one of the least of these, ye did it unto me." He had found the Mightiest by serving the least.

A little boy who, one evening watched the changing colors of the sunset sky, said to his aunt:

"Auntie, I wish I were a painter."

"Why, dear?" asked the lady.

The child answered, "Because then I could help God paint the sky."

But God does not need aid from any artist when He makes the sky beautiful. But He can use us to make beautiful and bright the life of those around us.

"Take down those saints, and coin them into shillings," said Cromwell, of the silver saints in a Catholic cathedral, "and send them about their Master's business."

Dr. Louis Albert Banks uses the following beautiful poem, from Sam Walter Foss, to show how a Christian feels for his fellow-workers:

"There are hermit souls that live withdrawn
In the place of their self-content;
There are souls like stars, that dwell apart,
In a fellowless firmament;
There are pioneer souls that blaze their paths
Where highways never ran;

But let me live by the side of the road,
And be a friend to man.

Let me live in my house by the side of the road,
Where the race of men go by;
The men who are good and the men who are bad,
As good, and as bad as I.

I would not sit in the scorner's seat,
Or hurl the cynic's bane;

Let me live in my house by the side of the road,
And be a friend to man.

I see from my house by the side of the road,
By the side of the highway of life,
The men who press with the ardor of hope,
The men who are faint with the strife.

But I turn not away from their smiles nor their tears,
Both part of an infinite plan;

Let me live in my house by the side of the road,
And be a friend to man.

I know there are brook-gladened meadows ahead,
And mountains of wearisome height;
And the road passes on through the long afternoon,
And stretches away to the night.

But still I rejoice when the travelers rejoice,
And weep with the strangers that moan,
Nor live in my house by the side of the road
Like a man who dwells alone.

Let me live in my house by the side of the road,
Where the race of men go by;
They are good, they are bad, they are weak, they are
strong,

Wise, foolish, and so am I.
Then why should I sit in the scorner's seat,
Or hurl the cynic's ban?

Let me live in my house by the side of the road
And be a friend to man."

III.

Men are going to fall unless we bear their burdens.

When Bishop Fowler was in a mining shaft in the far West, and had to climb a perpendicular ladder two hundred feet high, he said that it seemed utterly impossible. Just then a strong Yorkshire man said, "I will help you." "Who are you?" asked the Bishop. The man answered, "I am a local preacher in the Methodist Church. I will follow after you, and if you should faint you can not fall past me." Says the Bishop, "I believed him. His faith kindled mine, and I went up without fear and without nervous strain."

As we climb the rugged road of life, often with weary feet and failing strength, how comforting to know that some loving friend will follow after us, and if we faint we cannot fall past him.

An army was on the march and two soldiers walked side by side, one a stalwart fellow, the other frail and slender. The journey was telling on the latter, when his comrade said, "Let me carry your knapsack," and with thoughtful interest relieved him of his burden. So as we trudge over life's desert, there is a man by our side who

is weary and heavy laden, and who will falter and fall if we do not strengthen him.

"Every individual experience," says Dr. Huntington, "has, soon or late, its painful side, its crucial hours, when there is darkness over all the land, and we cry out to know if God has forsaken us. For the time, longer or shorter, we taste only the bitter, and feel only the thorns. The separations of death, the distance between our aspiration and performance, unsatisfied ambition, labouring year after year in vain, affection returned by indifference, the symptoms of fatal disease, former energy prostrate, a friend alienated, a child depraved, an effort to do good construed into an impertinence—unconquerable obstacles that we cannot measure and can scarcely speak of, heaped up against our best design—these are some of the frequent shapes of misery; but no list is full." What is our attitude toward those who are thus burdened? The voice of entreaty comes up from the depths of their broken hearts, crying as Paul did from the Mamertine prison: "Remember my bonds."

One stormy night a father awoke to find his little boy standing by his bedside feeling for his hand. "Are you sick my child?" anxiously inquired the father.

"No, papa, I'm not sick."

"Are you hungry?"

"No, papa, I'm not hungry. But listen papa, don't you hear the storm? It is dark in my room and I was afraid in there, and I want you, papa, just you."

Oh, my friends, there are thousand of God's lonely children to whom life is dark; the awful storm has left them broken and bleeding and helpless, and they want you—you to cheer them; you to weep with them; you to save them from despair!

I said a moment ago that men were going to fall unless we bear their burdens. I come now to a still sadder truth—many *have* fallen and have no heart to rise unless we reach forth the helping hand. I show you two dark pictures. View the first. A young man came from the country to the city. He obtained a good position. He wrote to his aged mother that he was doing well. She read the letter—read it again and again—and then with trembling hands removed her glasses, wiped away her tears, and kneeling down by the old-arm chair, thanked God for the success of her gifted son.

But one night this young man met some

wicked companions who dragged him through the sewers of iniquity, and now his morals are gone, his position is gone, and he is ashamed to go home.

View the second. A young woman wandered away from home and went into sin. She is on the billows rowing against the tide. Her life is one of sorrow. Her face is bathed in tears. She is broken-hearted. But look! the oars have slipped from her weak hands, her strength is gone, and she is sinking beneath the whelming flood. Let us leave her there a moment and see what has become of the young man. We find him still "in the depths," utterly discouraged. Be quick! lift him up and lead him back to Christ, for there is no time to lose. Why? Have you forgotten the sinking girl? We were to leave her but for a moment, you know. Ah, would to God it were but for a moment! Too many leave her forever. Let us man the life-boat and go out for her rescue. But you will not go with me? No difference. I must throw out the life-line of God's mercy to her, and without stopping to look at her sinful life. I shall grasp her hand with Christ-like pity and invite her to the heart, to the compassion, to the pardon of Him who said:

"Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more."

"We need not bid for cloister'd cell,
Our neighbor and our work farewell,
Nor strive to wind ourselves too high
For sinful man beneath the sky.

The trivial round, the common task
Would furnish all we ought to ask:
Room to deny ourselves; a road
To bring us daily nearer God."

In obeying this text, we fulfil the law of Christ.
"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." What is His law? Sacrifice. On the seal of the Baptist Missionary Society is the figure of an ox, with a plow on one side and an altar on the other, with this inscription beneath: "Ready for either." So we must be ready to serve or suffer.

In the West Virginia mountains the falling rains swelled a stream that rushing down a gorge washed away a railroad bridge. The train was due in thirty minutes. What should be done to warn it of the unknown danger? A woman who lived by the side of the track piled up her furniture and set it on fire. Then she ran up the line waving a burning brand. The engineer saw the signal, reversed the engine and whistled

“down brakes.” The train was stopped at the edge of the gorge, its passengers saved by the timely aid of the woman who had sacrificed all she had. And she did that for the bodies of men. What ought we to do for their souls? She had no bed on which to rest that night, but she had fulfilled the law of Him who had not where to lay His head. “Go, and do thou likewise.”

“Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.”

III.

LIFE AT FLOOD-TIDE.

"Covet earnestly the best gifts."—I. Cor. XII, 31.

When Rowland Hill was preaching at Wotton he said:

"Because I am in earnest, men call me an enthusiast. But I am not; mine are the words of truth and soberness. When I first came into this part of the country, I was working on yonder hill. I saw a gravel-pit fall in and bury three human beings alive. I lifted up my voice for help so loud that I was heard in the town below, at the distance of a mile. Help came and rescued the poor sufferers."

His enthusiasm saved the men. Earnestness is needed if we are to win success. A great reformer said: "I am in earnest, I will be heard," and he was heard. "Covet earnestly." While earnestness is first suggested by the text, it is the second thought—living at our best—upon which I wish to dwell.

An aged artist sat before an unfinished picture. His eyes were failing and he knew he must resign the work to younger hands. "I commission thee, my son," said he, "to do thy best." After much hesitation, and with a high purpose, the young man began. The injunction, "Do thy best" rang in his ears. When the picture was finished, the aged artist gave it over into the hands of Leonardo da Vinci, for he was the young man who had sought to do his best. We are all painting upon the canvas of life. We ply our brush upon the foreground, the middle ground, the background. God grant us steady hands, clear conceptions and high ideals, so that each stroke may be a master-stroke, until at last, the picture finished, He who gave us our commission may say: "Well done."

To do our best, we must have a great purpose in life. This thought is quaintly illustrated in a letter which appeared in the "Cumberland Presbyterian" a month ago, and which I reproduce.

"My Dear Neph^u:

When I overheard you a-tellin' Sis how much better you could of done in the debate last night if your cuffs had only hung half an inch lower, it sounded so much like you are in general that

I had to snicker. I noticed you a-divin' up your sleeve, but s'posed mebby you had an argument or two tucked up there: you didn't seem to have 'em anywhere else. Now, 'Lias you remind me of the hunter that spent so much of his strength fightin' off gnats that he hadn't any left for eagles. You can judge the size of a man by the size of the thing it takes to fret him. It's a sure sign of a weak nature to let little things so domineer over you that they get in the way of your self-control an' success. The Africans tell of a monstrous animal with an eye so big that it was blind to anything as small as a good-sized monkey. I wish your soul was too big for short cuffs an' small sights an' mean little snubs. You can no more snub a feller who is set on workin' out the mighty purposes of God than a boy on a raft could draw the fire of a fleet of battle ships. There was a little narrow-guaged engine down our way that blew its whistle so much at wood-chucks an' barking dogs that it got stalled on the grades. You can't stop to spit an' spat at little things that can't be helped, half of 'em because they're imaginary, an' have your strength left for the big things God wants you to do. Get a purpose into your life so big

that it will eclipse your little worries or else you'll be like Gulliver in Lilliput, fettered by a lot of pygmies. All that half the disheartened people in this world need to cure them of their sourness an' doubts is to get to work at something so big they won't have time for trifles.

Your Uncle,

JONATHAN HAYSEEDS."

Uncle Jonathan's letter is full of good common sense. For it is certain that we cannot do our best until our ideal is high enough to lift us above petty things. "Hitch your wagon to a star." But, you say, "I will never have an opportunity to do a great thing." That may be true, but you can live a great life. Doing our best does not necessarily mean standing on the high places of the field, within the view of gazing eyes, and doing deeds of valor that will immortalize our name. That may not be ours, but we can fulfil faithfully the duties of a lower station, and this will make all life great. For when we do our work, not for the praise of man, but for Christ's sake, there is nothing insignificant.

"Where God in generous fullness dwells,
Nor small nor great is known;

He paints the tiniest floweret-cells
O'er emerald meadows strewn;
And sees, but not with kinder eyes,
The heavens grow rich with sunset-dyes;
Both ministrant to beauty's sense,
Both signs of one Omnipotence.

He comes not forth with pageant grand
His marvels to perform.
A cloud 'the bigness of a hand,'
Can blacken heaven with storm.
A grain of dust, if He arrange,
The fortunes of a planet change.
An insect reef can overwhelm
The stately navies of a realm.

There are no trifles. Arks as frail
As bore God's prince of old,
On many a buoyant Nile stream sail
The age's heirs to hold.
From Jacob's love on Joseph shed,
Came Egypt's wealth and Israel's bread;
From Ruth's chance gleaning in the corn,
The Psalmist sang,—the Christ was born."

What often seems trivial is sometimes fraught with far-reaching consequences. A remarkable illustration of this truth is recorded in the life of Rev. F. W. Robertson. It is thus related by the Rev. Mr. Davies: "The daughter of Lady French, at whose house I met my friend, had been seriously ill. She was prevented from sleeping by the barking of a dog in one of the adjoining houses. This house was Captain Robertson's.

A letter was written to ask that the dog might be removed; and so kind and acquiescent a reply was returned, that Lady French called to express her thanks. She was much struck at that visit by the manner and bearing of the eldest son, and in consequence an intimacy grew up between the families." Of the influence of this acquaintance, Mr. Robertson writes: "If I had not met a certain person, I should not have changed my profession; if I had not known a certain lady, I should not probably have met this person; if that lady had not had a delicate daughter who was disturbed by the barking of my dog; if my dog had not barked that night, I should now have been in the dragoons, or fertilizing the soil of India." He says the barking of a dog led him to abandon military life for the ministry.

If we can realize that God is in everything, we may say with George Herbert:

"Teach me my God and King,
In all things Thee to see,
And what I do in any thing,
To do it as for Thee;

Not rudely as a beast,
To run into an action;
But still to make Thee prepossess,
And give it his perfection.

A servant with this clause
Makes drudgery divine:
Who sweeps a room, as for Thy laws
Makes that and th' action fine.

This is the famous stone
That truneth all to gold:
For that which God doth touch and own
Cannot for less be told."

Again, it is only when we are faithful in a few things, that we are prepared to be rulers over many things. In other words, the way to the highest is by the lowest.

In the January number of Scribner's Magazine for 1899, you may see the picture of William Tiffany. During the Hispano-American war he belonged to the "Rough Riders," and when Col. Theodore Roosevelt promoted him from Sergeant to Lieutenant, he said: "Tiffany, I am especially glad to give you this step, because you are about the only man who has never by sign or word acted as though he thought he deserved promotion. There are some who are always very busy when I pass, and who look at me as though they meant to say, 'See how humble I am and how strictly I attend to my duties. You, who know how important I am at home, will surely recognize this and make me an officer.' But you have never

acted as though you expected to be anything but a sergeant all your life, and you have done your work as though you had been a sergeant all your life, and so I am glad of this chance to make you a lieutenant."

It requires faithfulness in details to reach perfection. A friend of Michael Angelo called one day when he was working on a statue. Some time afterward he called again; the sculptor was still working. When his friend saw the figure, he exclaimed: "Have you been idle since I saw you last?" "By no means," said the sculptor, "I have retouched this part and polished that; I have softened this feature and brought out this muscle; I have given more expression to this lip and more energy to this limb."

"Well, well," said the friend, "all these are trifles."

"It may be so," replied Angelo, "but recollect that trifles make perfection, and that perfection is no trifle."

If we wish to reach the summit of a mountain, we must be content to climb. Should we desire ripe scholarship, we must study more than one lesson. The artist must touch the canvas often before the picture is finished. So he who seeks

the highest throne should first honor the footstool.

If we possess the best gifts, the world will discover it. The King, Ministers and Nobles who raised a monument to James Watt, inscribed upon the pedestal :

“Not to perpetuate a name
Which must endure while the peaceful arts flourish;
But to show
That mankind have learned to honor those
Who best deserve their gratitude.”

On one occasion, when Haydn’s “Creation” was to be rendered, the man in charge took fright and laid down his baton. The teacher who was to direct the choral part said to the committee, “I know but one man who can help us out of our plight; his name is Verdi, and he reads the most puzzling musical scores at sight. They sent for him. He came and though he had never seen a note of the difficult piece, he took direction of the oratorio and scored a great success.

Again, we cannot do our best, without concentrating all our force upon whatever we undertake. “This one thing I do.” Napoleon’s success came from breaking through the enemy’s line at one point; and one reason for his defeat at Waterloo was not following his usual plan. It is said that

Pericles knew only one street in Athens—the street that led from his home to the executive chamber. Spurgeon never went to dinner parties or public entertainments—he must preach, preach, preach.

A little boy with a shovel in hand undertook to carry a ton of coal from the sidewalk to the shute. A gentleman who passed while he was thus engaged said, “Do you expect to shovel that all in?” “Yes, sir,” said the boy, “if I keep at it.”

At the General Conference of 1896, I heard Mrs. Clinton B. Fiske relate an incident which deeply impressed me. There was an orphanage to which a strange lad had been brought. The first night after his arrival they were having prayers, when one little fellow made the following petition: “O Lord, bless the new boy, and help him stick to his job.”

Chauncy M. Depew says that when Andrew Johnson wanted to remove from office Edwin M. Stanton, Secretary of War, Charles Sumner sent a message to the United States Senate saying, “Stanton, stick.” It had a very wholesome effect.

Another thing that will help us to live at our best, is to remember that it is God’s work we are

trying to do, and therefore, we cannot afford to slight it. Twin babes were sent to bless the home of a Hindoo family. One was a girl and blind. The mother concluded that the goddess Gunga was angry with her and she resolved to make a sacrifice to appease her wrath. So she threw the other babe into the Ganges. Some one asked her why she did not sacrifice the blind child. She said, "I could not offer the girl, the blind one, when I had a boy, a perfect child. That would have made Gunga only more angry. The God must always have the best." We pity the benighted mother, but let us learn the lesson—God must have the best.

Lowell's lines "For an Autograph" have the right ring :

"Life is a leaf of paper white,
Whereon each one of us may write
His word or two, and then comes night.

'Lo, time and space enough,' we cry,
'To write an epic,' so we try
Our nibs upon the edge, and die.

Muse not which way the pen to hold,
Luck hates the slow and loves the bold,
Soon comes the darkness and the cold.

Greatly begin! though thou have time
But for a line, be that sublime,
Not failure, but low aim is crime."

Once more. There is such sweet comfort in the thought that if we try to do our best and seem to fail, God will make the pattern true. I ran across some lines the other day on "The Blind Weaver," in which this thought is beautifully expressed. Ever since I read them they have kept ringing in my ears, and shall find a place here.

"A blind boy stood beside the loom
And wove a fabric. To and fro
Beneath his firm and steady touch
He made the busy shuttle go.

And oft the teacher passed that way
And gave the colors, thread by thread;
But to the boy the pattern fair
Was all unseen—its hues were dead.

'How can you weave?' we, pitying, cried;
The blind boy smiled. 'I do my best;
I make the fabric firm and strong,
And one who sees does all the rest.'

O, happy thought! Beside life's loom
We blindly strive our best to do.
And He who marked the pattern out,
And holds the threads, will make it true."

IV.

FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH.

"Till I die I will not remove mine integrity from me."—Job xxvii, 5.

The rocks of Gibraltar have withstood the dash-ing of angry waves through all the centuries. They reach out their rugged arms in uttter defi-ance of flood and tempest. We want men like those wave-beaten rocks—men of moral fibre—heroes of principle who will not swerve from their convictions. But as Dr. Lorimer says, such characters are never produced in those youth who retire from the field before a shot is fired, and who never see anything worth fighting for, and who expect to be rescued by others from any inconveni-ence, and who would rather sell out the entire army than suffer annoyance or disability.

God is here preparing character for eternity. He is working, not on inert matter, but on the throbbing heart of man. As the scientist in his laboratory controls forces, fuses metals and

changes the form of things, so God is endeavoring to control our impulses, combine our purposes with His, and change our hearts till we are ready to say, "Till I die I will not remove mine integrity from me."

I read of such a character in the *Epworth Herald* not long ago. He belonged to the Ninth Illinois Regiment, United States Volunteer Infantry, whose regimental camp was at Jacksonville, Florida, last August. He cheerfully took his part in the drills and marches. But as the weeks went by, his strength failed, till one morning he answered to the sick call of the buglers. The disease developed into typhoid fever, and the surgeon prescribed wine as a stimulant. The boy replied: "When I joined the army I promised that I would not swear, or drink or gamble, and I have kept my promise, and I don't propose to break it now." He grew worse, and one night his father in Southern Illinois received a telegram which read: "Come immediately if you want to see Will alive." Meanwhile the nurses tried to persuade him to drink the wine, so as to keep up his strength till his father came. His only reply was: "Father would rather find me dead and having kept my promise, than alive and the

promise broken." He was still conscious when his father arrived. Lying in the hospital ward, a thousand miles from home, the stupor of death settling down upon him, he greeted his anxious father with these words: "I kept my promise father. I didn't think it made so much difference if I did die, for that is what a soldier is for, sometimes, but I didn't want to break my pledge."

Three hours later, while the gathering shades of twilight were falling, the suffering soldier answered to the trumpet reveille of the ruthless Reaper, and passed to be with God, his promise unbroken.

It requires moral heroism to do right under all circumstances. An incident is recorded in the life of "Tom Brown of Rugby" which serves my purpose to illustrate this thought. The new boy Arthur, from Devonshire, had just entered school. On the first night at the hour for retiring, he was shown to a room where there were twelve beds. It seemed strange to him to be with so many boys. At length he was ready to retire. Then came the struggle! He had promised his mother that he would kneel down and pray every night. After some hesitation he dropped on his knees. Tom Brown was pulling off his boots.

A young fellow shied a slipper at the boy who was praying. Tom saw the cowardly act and threw his boot at the head of the intruder.

"What do you mean, Brown?" said the bully.

"Never mind," said Tom, "if any fellow wants the other boot he knows how to get it."

Tom remembered that he, too, had made a similar promise to his mother, and how he had been wanting in courage to keep it. He fell upon his knees. When he had finished his prayer, he saw that two of his schoolmates had followed his example. What a victory he had won! But it required heroism.

I bring before you another youth, and pray that his example may stimulate you to a nobler life. I refer to Daniel. He steered his soul in safety through the perils of a Babylonian court. Though away from home, the thought of duty did not fade from his vision. When he found that the meat which he was expected to eat, had been offered to idols, he purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself. "Sink or swim, live or die, survive or perish, I will not touch it." But Daniel, you are in Babylon now. Why not do as the Babylonians do? And then, your future is at stake. You are in the king's palace

now, and will you, by a little scruple destroy your chances for promotion? Hear him as he answers: "It is nothing to me whether I am in Babylon or Jerusalem. .I believe the earth is the Lord's, therefore I must be careful what I do, no matter where I may be. I am not concerned about the future, for my times are in the hands of God. No matter what happens, I will not remove mine integrity from me."

In such a determination as this, there is a higher heroism than that of arms, and the world is coming to honor the man who dares to do right. A father and his son entered a restaurant, and on taking their seats at a table, the old man bowed his head and was about to return thanks, when a waiter came to take their orders. The orders were given, and again the father bowed his head. The son touched his arm and said in a low tone, "Father, it isn't customary to do that in restaurants."

"It's customary with me to return thanks to God wherever I am," was the old man's reply. For the third time he bowed his head and the son followed his example. A telegraph operator bowed his head; a reporter pushed back his plate and bowed his head, and every man in the room

felt a profound respect for this old man who was accustomed to return thanks to God, no matter where he was. God will honor such a man. "Him that honoreth me will I honor." There is an identity of interest between God and the man whose cause is right. Socrates expressed it when he said: "It is not allowed by Providence that a bad man should injure one better than himself. He may, indeed, put him to death, or send him into exile, or deprive him of civil rights; but his real prosperity the wicked are powerless to injure."

Again, since character is the most priceless thing in the world, we ought to guard it even at the cost of life.

The ermine is a very fastidious little animal. Its hair is white as the driven snow. It is very shy, and to capture it is a difficult task. But if you will sprinkle dirt in its pathway it will lie down and subject itself to captivity and death before it will soil one white hair. We had better give up life than surrender integrity.

There lived in Paris a poor but renowned artist. He was engaged on what he hoped to make the crowning work of his life. During the execution of this work it turned very cold. One night,

after he had retired, it occurred to him that the freeze would cause his statuary to crumble. He arose, and taking the covering from his bed, wrapped it around the work of art. He then lay down without a single covering to warm his shivering body. Next morning they found him dead, but the image was preserved.

The image of God is upon us. Let us preserve it at any cost.

Two words governed the life of William E. Dodge—Christ and Conscience. When a great corporation was about to decide to carry on business on the Lord's day, he fearlessly said to the other directors: "If you break God's law for a dividend, I go out."

When a Greek maid was asked what fortune she would bring her husband, she dropped her head a moment and said: "I will bring him what is more valuable than any other treasure, a heart unspotted, and virtue without a stain."

Maintaining our integrity may sometimes mean standing alone. We can afford to do that for the joy that will follow, when an act is done in the fear of the King. To illustrate this truth I give the words of a minister spoken on an anniversary occasion in New York. He said:

"Thirty years ago two young men started out to attend Park Theatre, to see a play which made religion ridiculous and hypocritical. They had been brought up in Christian families. They started for the theatre to see the vile play, and their early convictions came back to them. They felt it was not right to go, but still they went. They came to the door of the theatre. One of the young men stopped and started for home, but returned, came up to the door, turned away again and went home. The other young man went in. He went from one degree of temptation to another. Caught in the whirl of frivolity and sin, he sank lower and lower. He lost his business position. He lost his morals. He lost his soul. He died a dreadful death, not one star of mercy shining on it. "I stand before you to-day," said the minister, "to thank God that for twenty years I have been permitted to preach the gospel. I am the other young man." He stood alone but his soul was singing. In contrast with him I place another young man. When he left home his mother gave him a Bible and said: "My son, all the satisfaction and comfort of my life has come from religion. Never leave your mother's hope if you would have a mother's solace." But

this young man joined a club whose members did not believe in religion. One day he met a fatal accident. The physician said: "You cannot live more than an hour." His friends came and he said to them: "Where shall I be to-morrow?" They said, "We will look after your wife and children." "Yes," said he, "but I shall be where hope can never come. I would give everything now for the assurance of spending eternity with my mother." He went with the crowd, but his soul was lamenting.

It is a sad thing for a man to lose all sense of honor. Whittier has given us a very lamentable picture of Daniel Webster in a little poem which he wrote concerning the political recreancy of this brainy statesman.

"So fallen! so lost! the light withdrawn
Which once he wore!
The glory from his gray hairs gone
Forevermore!

Of all we loved and honored, naught
Save power remains—
A fallen angel's pride of thought,
Still strong in chains.

All else is gone; from those great eyes
The soul has fled.
When faith is lost, when honor dies,
The man is dead!

Then pay the reverence of old days
To his dead fame;
Walk backward, with averted gaze,
And hide the shame."

We have heard a great deal of late about heroes. But after all, life's victors are those who say: "Till I die I will not remove mine integrity from me."

"I sing the hymn of the conquered, who fell in the battle
of life—
The hymn of the wounded, the beaten, who died over-
whelmed in the strife;
Not the jubilant song of the victors, for whom the
resounding acclaim
Of nations was lifted in chorus, whose brow wore the
chaplet of fame,
But the hymn of the low and the humble, the weary,
the broken in heart,
Who strove and who failed, acting bravely a silent and
desperate part;
Whose youth bore no flower on its branches whose
hopes burned in ashes away,
From whose hands slipped the prize they had grasped
at, who stood at the dying of day
With the wreck of their life all around them, un-
pitied, unheeded, alone,
With death swooping down o'er their failure and all
but their faith overthrown.

While the voice of the world shouts its chorus—its
paeon for those who have won;
While the trumpet is sounding triumphant, and high
to the breeze and the sun

Glad banners are waving, hands clapping, and hurrying feet
Thronging after the laurel-crowned victors, I stand on the field of defeat.
In the shadows, with those who are fallen and wounded and dying, and there
Chant a requiem low, place my hand on their pain-knotted brows, breathe a prayer,
Hold the hand that is helpless, and whisper, 'They only the victory win
Who have fought the good fight, and have vanquished the demon that tempts us within;
Who have held to their faith unseduced by the prize that the world holds on high;
Who have dared for a high cause to suffer, resist, fight—if need be, to die.'

Speak, History! who are life's victors? Unroll thy long annals, and say
Are they those whom the world called the victors—who won the successor a day?
The martyrs or Nero? The Spartans, who fell at Thermopylae's tryst,
Or the Persians and Xerxes? His judges or Socrates? Pilate or Christ?"

I covet for you all such a victory, and in your behalf and mine, make the petition which an old railroad man offered, soon after his conversion, when asked to lead in prayer.

This is the way he worded it:
"O Lord, now that I have flagged Thee, lift up my feet from the rough road of life and plant

them firmly on the deck of the train of salvation. Let me use the safety-lamp, known as prudence, make all the couplings in the train with the strong link of Thy love, and let my hand-lamp be the Bible. And, Heavenly Father, keep all switches closed that lead off on the sidings, especially those with a blind end. O Lord, if it be Thy pleasure, have every semaphore block along the line show the white light of hope, that I may make the run of life without stopping. And, Lord, give us the ten commandments for a schedule: and when I have finished the run, on schedule time, pulled into the great dark station of Death, may Thou, the Superintendent of the Universe, say, 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant; come and sign the pay roll and receive your check for eternal happiness.' "

V..

TONGUE AND TEMPER.

"If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain."—James i, 26.

"He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city."—Prov. xvi, 32.

Most people talk enough. Some quite too much. Having talked all day, they persist in keeping at it after they have gone to sleep. Speech is a great blessing. Without it, business would come to a standstill. Deprived of it, we could neither relate our joys, nor speak of our sorrows. Even beasts and birds and creeping things have some kind of language. The horse neighs, the dove cooed, and the cricket chirps. But have you ever stopped to think about the amount of talking you do? It has been estimated that a public speaker utters in an hour, words enough to cover fifteen octavo pages. Of course he would in the same length of time, in

ordinary conversation, use many more. If all the words you have used for the past ten years were printed, you would have a large library. But what would it be worth? Would you like to have it read? It is related of Dean Swift that being present at an evening party, he took a seat in a corner of the room and commenced taking down what was said by those present. When asked what he was doing, he produced a verbatim report of what had been said. It is needless to add that most of the speakers were humiliated when they saw the superficial and trifling words they had said. "Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak." "Speech is silver, silence is golden."

Xenocrates in *Valerius Maximus* says: "I have been sometimes sorry that I spoke; I have never been sorry that I kept silent." We should be silent unless our speech will glorify God and benefit man. Silence is often a sign of wisdom. "A fool uttereth all his heart."

Phocian said to the Athenians, "You can't fight Philip. You have not the slightest chance with him. He is a man who holds his tongue; he has great disciplined armies, he can brag anybody in your cities here; and he is going on steadily with an unvarying aim toward his object; and you,

going on raging from shore to shore with all that rampant nonsense."

What a fearful description is given of the tongue in the epistle of James. "The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell. For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind: but the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison." Another inspired writer said: "Death and life are in the power of the tongue."

The thought of the text is, that he who has an unbridled tongue is not religious. "If any man among you seem to be religious—yes, *seem to be religious*—and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, that man's religion is vain." Again, this same writer says: "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body."

When the Psalmist asks: "Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?" part of his answer is: "He that backbiteth not with his tongue." This is one of the

lowest crimes to which a man can stoop. Pope says:

“The world with calumny abounds,
The whitest virtue slander wounds,
There are whose joy is, night and day,
To talk a character away.
Eager, from place to place they haste,
To blast the generous and chaste,
And—hunting reputation down,
Proclaim their triumph through the town.”

Shakespeare, in speaking of the same character, says:

“Whose edge is sharper than the sword:
Whose tongue outvenoms all the worms of the
Nile; whose breath rides on the posting winds
And doth belie all corners of the world—Kings,
Queens, and states, maids and matrons,
Nay, the secrets of the grave
This viperous slander enters.”

Paul says: “The poison of asps is under their lips.” Madame de Staél must have had a kindred thought when she made her retort to Monsieur de Choiseul. He had said some malicious thing about her, and sometime afterward she met him and said: “Ah, it is a long time since I have seen you, Monsieur de Choiseul.”

“Ah, Madame de Staél, I have been ill.”

“Seriously, Monsieur?”

"I had a narrow escape from being poisoned."

"Alas! Possibly you took a bite of your own tongue."

We ought to manifest a righteous contempt toward this pernicious practice. I have infinitely more respect for the man, who, under the cover of darkness, stealthily creeps in through my window and steals my coat, than I have for the one who maliciously defames my character.

"Who steals my purse steals trash;
But he who filches from me my good name,
Robs me of that which not enriches him,
But leaves me poor indeed."

"I hate the man who builds his name,
On ruins of another's fame."

"Low breathed talkers minion lispers
Cutting honest throats by whispers."

It may as well be said here as anywhere, that to listen to the tale-bearer is to lend him aid. It is a crime to pass bad money as well as to coin it. So the slanderer and the one who repeats his gossip, should be placed in the same category. "A wicked doer giveth heed to false lips; and a liar giveth an ear to a naughty tongue."

"Whoever keeps an open ear
For tattlers, will be sure to hear
The trumpet of contention;

Aspersion is the babbler's trade,
To listen is to lend him aid,
And rush into contention."

Somewhere I have read that to credit common report is in itself a species of calumny. Give the street gossipier a wide berth. Let him understand that he cannot peddle such merchandise at your door. The man who drives through the alley, stops at your back gate and hauls away the garbage barrel has an honorable occupation compared with him who goes from place to place raking up every vile story that may be in circulation.

Many would do well to make David's prayer their own: "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips."

Especially ought we to guard our words when they are likely to wound; for when once spoken they are beyond recall.

Rose Terry Cooke, in a little poem entitled, "Unreturning," says:

"Never shall thy spoken word
Be again unsaid, unheard.
Well its work the utterance wrought,
Woe or weal—whate'er it brought;
Once for all the rune is read,
Once for all the judgment said.
Though it pierced, a poisoned spear,

Though the soul thou holdest dear;
Though it quiver, fierce and deep,
Through some stainless spirit's sleep;
Idle, vain, the flying sting
That a passing rage might bring,
Speech shall give it fangs of steel,
Utterance all its barb reveal.

Give thy tears of blood and fire,
Pray with pangs of mad desire.
Offer life, and soul, and all,
That one sentence to recall;
Wrestle with its fatal wrath,
Chase with flying feet its path:—
Once for all thy word is sped;
None evade it but the dead.
All thy travail will be vain:
Spoken words come not again."

Another thing which should cause us to be careful what we say, is, that we are to give an account to the Master for our words. "But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment."

When Bishop Latimer was arraigned on trial for heresy he heard the scratch of a pen, which warned him that what he uttered was being taken down, and he says he was very careful what he said. There is a record-book in eternity in which our words are written down. "I will take heed to my ways that I sin not with my tongue."

But while the subject of tongue is large enough for an entire discourse, I must turn to the second part of my theme, which is temper.

Tongue and temper are near relatives. Tongue introduces temper—sometimes not very politely, but the introduction is given nevertheless. If we keep our tongue we are apt to keep our temper. You hear people say, "I lost my temper." What a pity they couldn't lose it! But that is not the word. The trouble is, they find their temper. When an English philosopher arranged that two thousand persons should be put under watchful eyes for the purpose of studying their disposition, without their knowledge, he found more than one-half were bad tempered. I know there are many things calculated to provoke us, but the *Youth's Companion* has the following, which shows that a man may control his temper under most trying circumstances:

"It is said of Thomas Bailey Aldrich that he once received a letter from his friend Professor Edward S. Morse and found the handwriting wholly illegible. Mr. Aldrich was not at a loss for an answer. In due time, there came to Mr. Morse the following reply:

"My Dear Morse:

It was very pleasant to receive a letter from you the other day. Perhaps I should have found it pleasanter if I had been able to decipher it. I don't think I mastered anything beyond the date, which I knew, and the signature, at which I guessed. There is a singular and perpetual charm in a letter of yours—it never grows old and it never loses its novelty. One can say every morning as one looks at it: 'Here's a letter of Morse's I haven't read yet. I think I shall take another shy at it to-day, and maybe I shall be able in the course of a few years to make out what he means by those t's that look like w's and those i's that haven't any eye-brows!' Other letters are read, and thrown away and forgotten, but yours are kept forever—unread. One of them will last a reasonable man a lifetime."

In contrast with this even-tempered man, is a young girl of whom Mrs. Margaret E. Sangster speaks when writing about "Unconscious Revelations." This girl came sweeping along on her bicycle with graceful ease, and looked the personification of gentleness. Yet when another girl, evidently just learning to ride, narrowly escaped colliding with her, the expert rider ex-

claimed in great rage: "Great Scott! I wish you would look where you are going!" Continuing, Mrs. Sangster says: "I saw that my beautiful maiden was not like the King's daughter, 'all glorious within.' She was impatient, she was hasty of speech and temper, and she failed to make allowance for the inexperience of another. I was saddened, and I wish with my whole heart that the young girl could realize how unfortunate for herself was the frame of mind and the habit of petulance which had made possible her impetuous remonstrance. Life may discipline her by greater trials than the clumsy blunder of a fellow-traveler on the road, and by and by she may learn to repress the vehement word of irritation. But what I long for, when I think of her and of thousands like her, is that they may not feel the impulse to needless vexation with the errors or even with the carelessness of others."

Our first impulse is to resent an injury or an unkindness. A German politician, replying to the slanders of the press, exclaimed in the German Parliament: "God keep us from a breed of statesmen with hearts of lead and hides of leather. Let us have men whose blood moves to their cheeks when lies are flung in their faces; for it is no ideal of mine to become acclimatized to liars."

That is one way to deal with injuries. Here is another: An aged man, who, when asked to answer some attack upon his character, replied: "For many years my character has taken care of itself, and I am not going to begin to defend it now."

Jesus was silent under injury. "When He was reviled, He reviled not again." When He was dying, He prayed for His murderers. He taught us that love is not easily provoked. When the Bible of Bishop Kerr was examined after his death, it opened spontaneously at Paul's wonderful chapter to the Corinthians on charity. So the life of Christ opened and closed there—beginning and ending in love.

Self-mastery is a great achievement. "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city." We are accustomed to say that Cæsar, Alexander and Napoleon are the three mightiest of this world, but he who succeeds in conquest of self is greater than them all.

Did you ever try to keep patient for one day? If you did, and succeeded, how happy you were when night came. You felt like singing:

"Give me joy, give me joy, O my friends;
For once in my life has a day
Passed over my head and out of my sight;
And my soul has naught to unsay.
No querulous word to the fair little child
Who drew me from study to play;
No fretful reply to the hundred and one
Who question me, gravely and gay;
No word to the beggar I fain would take back,
No word to the debtor at bay;
No angry retorts to those who misjudge,
And desire not a nay, but a yea;
No word, though I know I remember them all,
Which I would, if I could e'er unsay.
Give me joy, give me joy, O my friends,
For the patience that lasted all day!

I cannot close this sermon without saying that our time is short, and that it will be worse than wasted, if we use it for saying angry words, or manifesting an ungenerous spirit.

"They are slipping away, these sweet, swift years.
Life a leaf on the current cast;
With never a break in the rapid flow,
We watch them, as one by one they go
Into the beautiful past.

One after another we see them pass
Down the dim-lighted stair;
We hear the sound of their heavy tread
In the steps of the centuries long since dead,
As beautiful and fair.

There are only a few years left to love,
Shall we waste them in idle strife?

Shall we trample under our ruthless feet
Those beautiful blossoms, rare and sweet,
By the dusky way of life?

There are only a few swift years—ah! let
No envious taunts be heard;
Make life's fair pattern of rare design.
And fill up the measure with love's sweet wine,
But never an angry word."

VI.

THE MASTER'S SCHOOL.

"Learn of me."—Matt. xi, 29.

Jesus is an impressive teacher. He is thoroughly acquainted with His subject, has the gift of imparting knowledge, and knows the needs of all who attend His school. He is very original, borrowing nothing from others. His language is so plain that the common people hear Him gladly. His enthusiasm does not depend upon numbers, for He talks as earnestly to Nicodemus, or the woman at the well-side as He would to a thousand immortal souls. His textbook is the Bible. There is free tuition, and His school is open day and night. He governs well, for His school is under perfect discipline. He believes that he who spares the rod spoils the child, so He sometimes whips His scholars. But every stroke is measured by love. He takes pains to tell us this. "For whom the Lord loveth He

chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth." He knows it hurts, but tells us that afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto those who are exercised thereby. He teaches with authority, for God has employed Him. He knows His pupils will be influenced more by example than by precept, and tells John to write: "I have given you an example."

O, blessed Master, register our names in Thy catalogue, and teach us what we need to learn.

And first, let us come to Him for the lesson of Optimism. That word is from the Latin, *optimus*, and means the best. An optimist is one who believes that all events are ordered for the best, and who tries to see the best in everything. Jesus was an optimist. There are some pessimists who ought to be in His school. They never see the best in anything. Nothing pleases them. It is always too hot or too cold.

"When it's hot they want it cold,
When it's cold they want it hot,
Always wanting what is not."

If they go to church, the singing is too high or too low, the preaching is too loud or too long. They are determined to be miserable and try to make others feel the same way. They may try to

excuse themselves by saying that they have been deceived and wronged and therefore have lost faith in everybody and everything. But was not Jesus mistreated? As "Ian Maclaren" says: "A huge conspiracy encompassed Him, and labored for His death; one of His intimates betrayed Him; the priests of God produced false witnesses against Him; the people He loved clamored for His death; the Roman power He had respected denied Him justice; He was sent to the vilest death. During His long ordeal, His serenity was never disturbed; He was never angry save with sin. He never lost control of Himself or became the slave of circumstances. His bequest to the disciples was Peace, and He spoke of Joy in the upper room. He was so lifted above the turmoil of this life, that Pilate was amazed; and amid the agony of the Cross, He prayed for His enemies. Nothing has so embittered men as utter poverty or social injustice. Jesus endured both, and maintained the radiant brightness of His soul. His was optimism set in the very heart of pessimism."

We often fail to see the best because we do not look for it. Last Wednesday evening when I entered the prayer-meeting, a good woman

handed me a box and asked: "Do you like oats?" That was a stunner. I have never eaten oats, but my impression is that there are some things more palatable. Supposing, however, that she meant oat-meal, I answered her question in the affirmative. She then handed me a box marked "Quaker Oats." The next morning I took it to my boarding-house and told the landlady she might use the contents for breakfast food. When I went back to dinner she said: "Did you open that box?" I told her I did not, when to my surprise she exclaimed: "Well, it is full of cake." I took a peep at it and saw fruit-cake, sponge-cake, chocolate-cake, and yet another kind, the name of which I have quite forgotten. I thought I was going to be fed on oats, when lo! I was to be feasted on cake.

A lady entered a car on a road upon which she had frequently traveled. She was tired and to her great satisfaction found a very comfortable seat. Turning to the conductor, she said: "What delightful seats these are! How long have you had them on this train?" "How long," he said, "I'm sure I don't know. Ever since you have been going on this train, I suppose, only you have never happened to take one of them before."

As the train sped on she thought: "This is very like the way we do in our Christian life; quite too much like the way I have been doing of late. Perfect comfort, rest for body and soul, is prepared for me, and has been waiting for me ever since I began to travel the heavenward journey, but I have never taken possession of it. I have jolted along over the rough places most uncomfortably, when I might have rested in the Lord. I have never noticed these comfortable seats before, yet this man says they have been here a long time; but I have taken my place in another car without looking to see whether the train afforded anything better. I'll not make the same mistake again. It is wise to take the best in everything as we go through this world. And if wise to do so in temporal things, how much more in things spiritual. Why should I not have the best? I will surely hereafter inquire more diligently what my privileges are, and I will take possession of all the Lord has provided for me."

Mr. M. A. Kidder, in his poem "The Golden Side," says:

"There is many a rest in the road of life,
If we only would stop and take it;
And many a tone from the better land.
If the querulous heart would make it.

To the sunny soul that is full of hope,
And whose beautiful trust never faileth.
The grass is green and the flowers are bright
Though the winter storm prevaleth.

Better to hope though the clouds hang low,
And to keep the eyes still lifted,
For the sweet blue sky will soon peep through
When the ominous clouds are lifted.
There was never a night without a day,
Or an evening without a morning;
And the darkest hour as the proverb goes,
Is the hour before the dawning.

There is many a gem in the path of life,
Which we pass in our idle pleasure,
That is richer far than the jeweled crown
Or the miser's hoarded treasure;
It may be the love of a little child,
Or a mother's prayers to heaven,
Or only a beggar's grateful thanks
For a cup of water given.

Better to weave in the web of life
A bright and golden filling,
And to do God's will with a ready heart
And hands that are swift and willing,
Than to snap the delicate, minute threads
Of our curious lives asunder,
And then blame heaven for the tangled ends,
And sit and grieve and wonder."

Secondly. We learn from the Master the lesson of prayer. And here our need is great, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought. But we may come as did the disciples, with the

request, "Lord, teach us to pray." He knows the lesson, for He was a man of prayer. He prayed in Gethsemane. He prayed on the Cross of death. He prayed in all His great emergencies. So He teaches not only a form of prayer, but also its necessity. He places it as a preventative against entering into temptation, and makes it the condition of finding grace to help in time of need.

There are those who tell us that the only benefit of prayer is its reflex influence upon him who prays. They say God is absolutely independent of all that is outside of Himself. His will has determined what is to be, and since He is unchangeable, therefore prayer can not move Him, or cause Him to do what otherwise would not be done. This might be true if God were only one Person. But there are three Persons in God—the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. "When," as Mr. Murray says, "eternal Love begat the Son, and the Father gave the Son as the Second Person a place next Himself, as His Equal and His Counsellor, there was a way opened for prayer and its influence in the very inmost life of Deity itself. Just as on earth, so in heaven, the whole relation between Father and Son is that of giving and

taking. And if that taking is to be as voluntary and self-determined as the giving, there must be on the part of the Son an asking and receiving.” God had said: “Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.” Jesus had full confidence that the Father heard His prayer. When He stood at the grave of Lazarus, He said: “Father I thank thee that thou hast heard me.” He knew also that God would hear His children if they prayed in His name. “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.”

Let us honor that all-prevailing Name, and ask Jesus to teach us to pray.

Thirdly. The lesson of meekness and humility must be learned from Christ. “I am meek and lowly in heart.” He taught that the way to thrones would lead through the valleys—that humility should be recognized as the counterpart of exaltation. He taught the disciples a new lesson on prestige when He reminded them that whoever attained greatness must become the

servant of all. Ruskin has well said: "I believe humility is the first test of a truly great man. I do not mean by humility doubt of his own power or hesitation of speaking his opinions, but a right understanding of the relation between what he can do and say and the rest of the world's sayings and doings. All great men not only know their business, but usually know that they know: they are not only right in their main opinions, but usually know they are right in them; only they do not think much of themselves on that account. Amalfi knows that he can build a good dome at Florence; Albert Durer writes calmly to one who has found fault with his work, "It cannot be better done;" Sir Isaac Newton knows that he has worked out a problem or two that would have puzzled anybody else; only they do not expect their fellow-men, therefore, to fall down and worship them."

Lord, teach us to be meek, and then we shall inherit the earth.

Fourthly. We learn from the Master the lesson of self-sacrifice.

A mother watches over her suffering child with loving devotion, and though wan and weary, refuses to leave its bed-side till its early life goes

out in death; Sir Philip Sydney, mortally wounded in the battle at Warnsfeld, his lips parched with thirst, refuses a drink of water, saying to his attendants, "Give it to that poor wounded man near me; his sufferings are greater than mine;" General Johnson, sorely wounded at the battle of Shiloh, when he learns that many others are wounded, including a large number of the enemy, orders the surgeon to leave him and give them his services, saying, "These men were our enemies a moment ago; they are prisoners now. Take care of them." But long before the anxious mother kept midnight vigil over her sick child; long before Sydney refused to drink, that another might slake his burning thirst; long before Johnson died with the command upon his pallid lips, "Take care of the enemy," there had been Another who sought in tenderest love to soothe the suffering, and when His course on earth was finished, went to the altar of His cross, there to suffer in bitterest agony, refusing to save Himself that He might save others.

Finally. We come to Him for the lesson of resignation under suffering. I know He prayed for the cup to pass. I have never wondered at that. With all our sins and sorrows pressed into

it, it were enough to make it bitter. But with the same breath He asked for its removal, He also said: "Nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt."

A Christian woman whose sufferings were protracted and intense, said: "I would not have one pain less, if this is the will of God my Father." Her pastor called to see her. She took his hand, saying: "Ask our Father, please, that I may give a good testimony to His sustaining grace." Ah, that is it, a good testimony to His sustaining grace, for that grace is sufficient. Did not Paul find it so when he wanted the thorn removed?

Somewhere I have read that there shall be moments in which our Gethsemane shall reveal no flower, in which the cup shall not pass, in which the legions of angels shall not come; yet strange to say, we shall be strong. For we shall fly without pinions, walk without feet, breathe without air, praise without words, laugh without sunshine, bless without knowing why, and our joy shall be only from God.

"Dear Christ, because the way
That Thou didst walk on earth was sorrowful,
And they that seek it find oft marked with blood
Thy footprints, shall I say,

'Give me a sunnier path, more flowers to cull,
And all the things that this world calleth good?'

And, turning from the sound
Of Thy meek voice, whose pleading 'Follow me'
Seems not so sweet as others' whispering 'Come,'
And which so soon is drowned
In earth's loud music, shall I say to Thee,
'I choose this world; here finds my heart its home?'

Nay, tender, patient Friend!
Though sorrowful that way, take Thou my hand
And lead me in it. Though I cannot see
Through blinding tears its end,
It matters not, I know 'tis to the land
Where longing hearts meet face to face with Thee.

'Twill often lead, I know,
Away from earth, to many a lonely height,
From which the world will seek to tempt me by
The many flowers that grow
Beside its pathways, and which, to the sight,
Are fair and gay, but ah, so quickly die.

And as I journey on,
I know my feet must one day reach the gate
Of some sad Garden of Gethsemane,
Where I must kneel alone
In darkness, as Thou didst, and pray that Fate
Will take away some cup she pours for me.

And if, O perfect One,
Thou say'st these trembling lips that cup must drink,
Quiet their sobbing, till they say with Thee,
'Father, Thy will be done.'
And when I feel Thee near I will not shrink,
But to its dregs will drink it silently."

VII.

THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT.

"Honour thy father and thy mother."—Ex. xx, 12.

After Christ had caught a vision of the relation He sustained to His heavenly Father's business He returned to Nazareth and for eighteen years was subject to his parents. We are thus taught that parental authority is a divine ordinance. Young people therefore should accept this truth and yield a loving obedience to parents. Honor thy father. Yes, the father should not be overlooked. When we preach on the training of children, let us not address the entire sermon to mothers. Motherhood is sacred, to be sure, but so is father-hood. He is not in the nursery as much as the mother, because he must be at the store or in the field, toiling for the comforts of a material home. Hold his name sacred. Encircle him with love, and fill his declining years with comfort. History

records that three brothers entered the Olympic games and were victors. When they returned with the garlands they put them on their father's brow, and he was so overjoyed that he dropped dead. And I want all young people who hear me, to twine some wreath of joy for their father's brow. Or if perchance the broken veteran has gone to wear a fadeless crown, then take your fairest flowers where his body sleeps in dreamless slumber, and leave them as love's tribute to his precious memory.

We read that Joseph was a favorite with his father, and I have no doubt that it was due, in a measure, to his filial respect and obedience. See how he treated him when he came down into Egypt to see his son before he died. Joseph made ready his chariot and went to meet him. After the weeping is over, he will present him to Pharaoh. Why, Joseph, he is one hundred and thirty years old, and cannot stand as erect as when he made for you the coat of many colors. And then he has come a long distance in a wagon and his hat is dusty, his shoes are not polished and may soil the carpet. No difference, and he ushers him into the royal palace and says: "Pharaoh, King of Egypt, this is my father!"

What next? He gives him a possession in the land of Rameses, the very best in all that country. And then when he dies, Joseph with military escort takes his lifeless form to the family burial ground at Machpelah and interts it beside Rachel, Joseph's mother. The blessing of the Lord God of Abraham will be upon such a son as that.

When Troy was burning, Æneas takes Anchises, his father, upon his shoulders and carries him away from the doomed city.

Dr. Talmage pays the following tribute to his father: "He walked through many a desert, but every morning had its manna, and every night its pillar of fire, and every hard rock a rod that could shatter it into crystal fountains at his feet. More than once he came to his last dollar, but right behind it he found Him who owns the cattle on a thousand hills, and out of whose hands the fowls of heaven peck their food, and who hath given to all His children a warranty deed for the whole universe in the words, 'All are yours.' Through how many thrilling scenes he had passed! He stood, at Morristown, in the choir that chanted when George Washington was buried. He talked with young men whose grandfathers he had held upon his knee. He de-

nounced at the time Aaron Burr's infamy. He saw the United States grow from a speck on the world's map till all nations dipped their flag at our passing merchantmen, and our 'national airs' were heard on the steeps of the Himalayas. He worked unweariedly from the sunrise of youth to the sunset of old age, and then in the sweet nightfall of death, lighted by the starry promises, went home taking his sheaves with him. Mounting from earthly to heavenly service, I doubt not there were a multitude that thronged heaven's gate to hail him into the skies—those whose sorrows he had appeased, whose burdens he had lifted, whose guilty souls he had pointed to a pardoning God, whose dying moments he had cheered, whose ascending spirits he had helped upon the wings of sacred music. I should like to have heard that long, loud, triumphant shout of heaven's welcome." Honor thy father.

Honor thy mother. An old rabbi said: "God could not be everywhere and so He made mothers." John Randolph was saved from infidelity by the remembrance of the time when his mother took his hand in hers and taught him to say: "Our Father who art in heaven."

When a little boy asked his mother which char-

acter in "Pilgrim's Progress" she most admired, he received the reply, "Christian, of course; he is the hero of the story." "I don't," said the son; "I like Christiana best; for when Christian went on his journey, he started alone; but when Christiana went, she took the children with her." It was the potent cry "My son! My son!" of Volumnia the mother of Coriolanus that saved Rome.

We get our first impressions from her and carry them with us to the grave. Some years ago a company of Indians were captured and it was discovered that there were several stolen children among them. They had been captives for years. When this fact became known, many, whose children had been stolen, came, hoping to find their own. Among the number who came was an anxious mother who had been robbed of a boy and girl. But to her great sorrow she saw no face that was familiar; nor was she recognized by any one. She was turning away in despair, when she paused, and began to sing a hymn which she had often sung to her children before they were stolen. She had not finished the first stanza till a young man and woman ran up to her exclaiming, "O mamma! mamma!" and she folded her long lost ones to her heaving bosom.

Bishop Vincent gives us an insight into his childhood and the lasting influence of his mother, when he says: "Beyond the holy place was the 'holy of holies.' For fifteen years that I can remember, it was my mother's custom to take the children into her own room after the regular Sabbath evening song and prayer. In the darkness, in the twilight, or in the moonlight, we followed her. And there seated together without a light she would talk in a tender way about eternity and duty, about our faults as children, her anxiety about us, her intense desire for our salvation, how we ought to be more patient with each other, more cheerfully obedient to father, more guarded in our speech. Then we knelt together, and she prayed. And how she could pray! Living with God seven days a week through all the weeks, when she brought us, her children, to the mercy seat on Sabbath evening was not heaven opened, and did not the place seem holy ground, and can anyone wonder that her children cannot recall those scenes without a thrill and a flood of tears and a vow of renewed consecration?"

A mother is the first one who greets us with love and the last who gives us up.

"If I were hung on the highest hill,
I know whose loye would follow me still,
O, mother o' mine, O, mother o' mine.

If I were drowned in the deepest sea,
I know whose tears would come down to me,
O, mother o' mine, O, mother o' mine.

If I were damned of body and soul,
I know whose love would make me whole,
O, mother o' mine, O, mother o' mine."

O. W. Holmes says: "Youth fades; love droops; the leaves of friendship fall; a mother's secret hope outlives them all."

Lord Shaftesbury says: "Give me a generation of Christian mothers, and I will undertake to change the whole face of society in twelve months."

"God thought to give the sweetest thing
In His almighty power
To earth; and deeply pondering
What it should be, one hour,
In fondest joy and love of heart
Outweighing every other,
He moved the gates of heaven apart
And gave to earth—a mother."

Do we value such a friend as highly as we should? Do we let her wash the dishes and sweep the house, when by doing so ourselves, we might rest her tired hands, and keep the wrinkles

from her beautiful face? Do we try in every way to honor her? President Garfield paid a touching tribute of respect to his mother after his inaugural address, when he turned, and stooping down imprinted an affectionate kiss upon her thin, withered lips, as much as to say: "I remember how you toiled and sacrificed for the children after father died. Some little honor has at last come to me, but I take from my brow the laurels the people have placed there, and I put them on your brow where they properly belong."

What remarkable devotion was manifest by President McKinley during the last illness of his aged mother. With the cares of a nation weighing heavily upon his heart, he finds time to hasten from Washington, in order that he may minister to her last want. When he reaches the sick room, his sister Helen says: "Mother, here is William. If you recognize him hold out your hand." The aged sufferer is almost unconscious but seems to make an effort to extend her hand which is eagerly grasped by the President. He has brought some beautiful flowers from the conservatory of the White House, and selects from them a white lily—emblem of her own purity—and thoughtfully places it in her hand. Death

will soon release her hold on it, but when she passes to where flowers eternal bloom, she will remember it as love's offering from her devoted son.

Have you ever thanked God for a Christian mother? As you think of her and the altar where she taught you to pray; as you recall the merriment around the fire in the long winter evenings, you sing with Mary Burr Banks:

"O, the five-o'clock chime brings the coziest time
That is found in the whole of the day,
When Larry and Gus and the others of us
Come in from our study and play.
When we push the big chair to the hearth over there,
And pile the wood higher and higher,
And we make her a space in the very best place—
And mother sits down by the fire.

There's a great deal to say at the close of the day,
And so much to talk over with mother;
There's a comical sight or a horrible plight,
Or a ball game, or something or other;
And she'll laugh with Larry, and sigh with Harry,
And smile to our heart's desire
At a triumph won or a task well done—
When sitting down by the fire.

Then little she'll care for the clothes that we tear,
Or the havoc we make on her larder;
For the toil and the strife of our every day life
She will love us a little harder;

Then our lady is she, and her knights we would be,
And her trust noble deeds will inspire;
For we long then anew to be generous and true—
When mother sits down by the fire."

The penalty attached to disobedience to parents, under the Mosaic law was death. "If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and that, when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them: Then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gates of his palace; and all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die."

In Proverbs we are told that "The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it."

But on the other hand notice the reward promised to those who accord reverence and obedience to parents. "Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."

I have heard of a little girl who interpreted this passage in an amusing way. It seems that her

mother wanted her to stay in doors on Sunday, and in the evening, after having sat in the house all day, the child said: "Mamma, have I honored you to day?" "I don't know," replied the mother; "why do you ask?" "Because," said the little one, "the Bible says, 'Honor thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be long;'" and this has been the longest day I ever saw!"

As I speak on this subject I am reminded that some who hear me are away from the restraints of home. Don't forget to send a letter to the dear ones who eagerly watch for it. How it will cheer them to know that they are not forgotten. The following beautiful lines were sent to a mother on her birthday:

"From this home on the hills to that other,
 Across the wide fields, far away,
I send you love's greeting, dear mother,
 And the fondest, best wishes to-day.

How memory and love go together
 To the bright, happy days that are gone,
When the chestnut-brown locks of my mother,
 Were beauty itself to her son!

To the time when, with sisters and brothers,
 And with father so noble and strong,
I was blest with the dearest of mothers,
 And with happiness all the day long.

But, though your dear locks are now silver;
They're beautiful still to your boy
As the sunlight that played on the river
Near the home of his innocent joy.

From the old-fashioned garden I'd gather
The prettiest flowers that grow.
And on the dear brow of my mother
To-day a bright garland bestow.

Dear father, dear sister, dear brother.
Dear children, let's make her a crown,
And wish, on this day, for dear mother,
Full many a happy return!

And now, clasping hands with each other,
We'll gather around her and say;
'God bless you! We love you, dear mother,
And bring you these tokens to-day.' "

VIII.

THE SOUL'S REINFORCEMENT.

"O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him."—Psa. xxxiv, 8.

The thought of God's infinite wisdom overwhelms us; His purity awes us; His eternity amazes us; but His goodness comforts us. The text therefore cheers us. "The Lord is good." "They shall utter abundantly the memory of thy great goodness." "Goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life." The word "God" is from the same root as the word "Good."

But it may be asked: "If God be good why does He permit evil to exist?" The problem of *theodicy* is to reconcile the existence of evil with the goodness of God. Fatalists, Materialists, Pantheists, Dualists, and Atheists say there are no contingencies; and theodicy with them has no importance. But whence came evil? Dr. Ray-

mond says: "Sin and evil exist by the divine permission;" and he shows that man has no just cause to complain against the goodness of God because there is ever present with him an all-sufficient remedy for his ill; not a means of removing it but a support under it. Continuing he says: "That God is good, no man can reasonable doubt; that evil exists, all men know certainly; that the two are reconcilable one with the other is, therefore, beyond question; but how, to human thought, they are to be reconciled, is yet a question, and it may so remain till God Himself, in the final issues of man's earthly history, shall vindicate his ways, and every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that God hath done all things well."

We have a proof of the goodness of God in His dealings with sinners. His day is desecrated, His name is blasphemed, His law is trampled under foot. But how long suffering He is! "He hath not dealt with us after our sins nor rewarded us according to our iniquities." "It is of the Lord's mercy that we are not consumed."

We have here also a hearty invitation to become partakers of God's goodness. "O taste and see." The natural impulse of a soul on be-

coming acquainted with Christ is to bring others into the same blessed relation. Andrew brought his brother Simon to Jesus. Philip brought Nathanael. Moses invited Hobab, saying, "Come thou with us and we will do thee good: for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel." And when Hobab refused, saying, "I will not go; but will return to my own land;" Moses was so intensely in earnest, that he cried out, "Leave us not, I pray thee."

Another thought which I wish to impress is this: Personal contact with Christ is sufficient to remove all unbelief. "Taste and see that the Lord is good."

Nathanael asked Philip, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Philip did not argue the claims of Christ, but simply said "Come and see."

On this subject Dr. J. M. Buckley finds material for a strong editorial, which appears in *The Christian Advocate*, Jan. 19, 1899. He says:

"The reasons men assign for ignoring the claims of Jesus are many, but the great majority of them have their foundation in either an unwillingness to consider these claims, or in ignorance concerning the character of Jesus, and the trans-

forming power which it exerts over the hearts and lives of men. To many Jesus is but a name, not a personality; or an historic character, not a living or potent force. They hesitate to look with favor upon the supernatural because they are so completely immersed in the natural. Of them it may be said that their eyes are holden that they cannot see Him. They claim that there are many things relating to Jesus and to the Christian faith that they do not understand, and that they are inclined to think are beyond human comprehension, and they are slow to subscribe to what they do not clearly apprehend.

"No one will claim that a veil of impenetrable mystery does not still enshroud Jesus, the Saviour of men. But that fact does not constitute a sufficient reason for His rejection. The world is full of mystery and some of the commonest things of life that are the fullest of mystery and simply baffle investigation are accepted without question, and men order their lives in accordance with them. Why, then, should the objection be raised with reference to Jesus and His relation to the soul life?" The editor then goes on to show that this failure to apprehend Christ fully, should lead to closer study of His life, and that no one can

understand Him at a distance, but that personal contact and spiritual accord with Him will reveal Him in a way both startling and satisfying to the most stubborn unbeliever. "Taste and see."

I call your attention in the next place, to the reinforcement that comes to a soul that has faith in God. "Blessed is the man that trusteth in him."

1. *He is blessed with a consciousness of spiritual strength.* "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." He is strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Christians tell us they cannot do this, that or the other duty. Why? They are "out of touch" with Christ.

"Only a smile, yes, only a smile,
That a woman o'erburdened with grief
Expected from you; 'twould have given her relief,
For her heart ached sore the while;
But weary and cheerless she went away,
Because, as it happened, that very day
You were 'out of touch' with the Lord.

Only a word, yes, only a word,
That the spirit's small voice whispered 'Speak;'
But the worker passed onward unblessed and weak,
Whom you were meant to have stirred
To courage, devotion, and love anew,

Because, when the message came to you,
You were 'out of touch' with your Lord.

Only a note, yes, only a note
To a friend in a distant land;
The spirit said 'Write,' but then you had planned
Some different work, and you thought
It mattered little. You did not know
'Twould have saved a soul from sin and woe—
You were 'out of touch' with your Lord.

Only a song, yes, only a song,
That the Spirit said, 'Sing to-night,
Thy voice is thy Master's by purchased right,'
But you thought, "Mid this motley throng,
I care not to sing of the city of gold;"
And the heart that your words might have reached
grew cold—
You were 'out of touch' with your Lord.

Only a day, yes, only a day,
But O! can you guess my friend,
Where the influence reaches, and where it will end,
Of the hours that you fritter away?
The Master's command is, 'Abide in Me,'
And fruitless and vain will your service be
If 'out of touch' with your Lord."

"Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power." Trust brings power. Yonder in a tenement house is a poor girl dying. By her side is a woman soothing her with the promises of God. Who is this woman? I do not know her name. I only know that faith has reinforced

her soul, and that the joy of the Lord is her strength.

2. *He is blessed with a sense of personal security.* In 1665, Cromwell sent Whitelock as envoy to Sweden. The nation was greatly distracted. Whitelock could not sleep at night. A confidential servant said: "Pray, sir, will you give me leave to ask you a question?"

"Certainly."

"Pray, sir, don't you think God governed this world very well before you came into it?"

"Undoubtedly."

"And pray, sir, don't you think that He will govern it quite as well when you are gone out of it?"

"Certainly."

"Then pray, sir, excuse me, but don't you think you may as well trust Him to govern it as long as you are in it?"

Whitelock made no reply, and turning about, soon fell asleep.

Trust enabled Moses to fear not the wrath of Kings. It nerved Caleb and Joshua to withstand the mighty current of rebellion. It made Nehemiah, in a time of great peril exclaim: "Should such a man as I flee?" It strengthened

Luther at the Diet at Worms. He was summoned there and promised safety. Before starting he wrote to Spalatin: "If his majesty calls me to account, so that I am ruined, and am looked upon, on account of my answer, as an enemy to the empire, still I am ready to come. For I have no intention of fleeing, nor of leaving the word in danger, but I mean to confess it unto death, so far as Christ's grace sustains me. But I am certain the blood-hounds will not rest till they have put me to death." Having finished his defence, he said: "Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise. God help me! Amen."

God makes such a soul His constant companion. He places on his brave bosom the badge of honor. He makes him the instrument of fulfilling His word. He gives him a beatific vision that rises above all clouds. He holds him with an anchorage that all the swelling billows cannot move, and flecks his firmament with stars of hope that darkness cannot quench.

This trust made Paul secure when from Mile-tus he sends to Ephesus for the elders of the church. He tells them of serving the Lord with all humility of mind—tells of tears and temptations which befell him by the lying in wait of the

Jews—tells of how he had taught publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. “And now,” says he, “behold I go bound unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things which shall befall me there: save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.”

“He holds no parley with unmanly fears,
Where duty bids, he confidently steers,
Faces a thousand dangers at her call,
And trusting in his God, surmounts them all.”

3. *He is blessed with exemption from all anxiety.* We have a Father who always helps. A young man found himself in financial straits, without knowing what to do to escape adversity. His father learned of his embarrassment and sent him a telegram which read: “Draw on me for what you want.” He went at once to the bank for all the money he needed. Let us receive our heavenly Father’s word with equal confidence.

"My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." That is a check large enough to cover our deepest need, and it is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes. God is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think. He can fulfil every promise He makes. When Abraham's faith was tested, "he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but being fully persuaded that what he had promised he was able to perform."

David trusted Him when he said: "I shall not want." That includes spiritual and physical wants. The Lord provides for soul and body. When we do our part we can always claim the divine promise.

A husband remonstrated with his wife for being so cheerful in the midst of misfortune, but what a beautiful lesson her calm trust teaches us.

" 'Good wife, what are you singing for? You know
we've lost the hay,
And what we'll do with horse and kye is more than I
can say;
While like as not, with storm and rain, we'll lose
both corn and wheat.'
She looked up with a pleasant face, and answered
low and sweet:

'There is a Heart, there is a Hand, we feel, we cannot
see;
We've always been provided for, and we shall always
be!'

He turned around with sullen gloom. She said, Love,
be at rest;
You cut the grass, worked soon and late, you did
your very best.
That was your work; you've naught to do with wind
and rain,
And do not doubt but you will reap rich fields of gol-
den grain;
'There is a Heart, there is a Hand, we feel, but cannot
see;
We've always been provided for, and we shall always
be!'

'That's like a woman's reasoning—we must because
we must.'

She softly said: 'I reason not; I only work and
trust;
The harvest may redeem the hay; keep heart whate'er
betide;
When one door's shut I've always found another open
wide.'
'There is a Heart, there is a Hand, we feel, but cannot
see;
We've always been provided for, and we shall always
be!'

He kissed the calm and trustful face; gone was his
restless pain;
She heard him, with a cheerful step, go whistling down
the lane,
And went about her household tasks; full of a glad
content,

Singing to time her busy hands as to and fro she went;
'There is a Heart, there is a Hand, we feel, but cannot see;
We've always been provided for, and we shall always be!'

Days come and go—'twas Christmas-tide, and the great fire burned clear.
The farmer said: 'Dear wife, it's been a good and happy year;
The fruit was grain; the surplus corn has bought the hay you know.'
She lifted then a smiling face and said: 'I told you so,'
'For, there is a Heart, there is a Hand, we feel, but cannot see;
We've always been provided for, and we shall always be!'"

O, brother, sister, we can trust such a Friend!
We can rely upon the Omnipotence of Him who called Lazarus from the tomb; who, rising from sleep, saved the sinking ship; who converted Saul of Tarsus on his way to Damascus; who sent the demoniac to his home, clothed and in his right mind; who inspired the martyrs to a heroic death, and who enabled Job to say: "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him."

Do you know anything against Him that He should not be trusted? Did He ever do anything wrong? Did He ever harbor an unkind thought?

No, no. Surely then, we can trust Him, living,
dying, and forever.

It was of Him Whittier sang when he wrote:

"I know He is, and what He is
Whose one great purpose is the good
Of all. I rest my soul on His
Immortal love and Father-hood,
And trust Him as His children should."

I fear no more. The clouded face
Of nature smiles; through all her things
Of time and space and sense I trace
The moving of the Spirit's wings.
And hear the song of hope she sings."

IX.

THE MARRIAGE RELATION.

"Be ye not unequally yoked together."—II Cor., vi, 14.

Marriage is a divine institution. It was ordained of God in infancy of time, when the young world was sparkling in the dews of eternity. Jesus sanctified and adorned this relation by his presence and first public miracle in Cana of Galilee, and Paul declared it to be honorable among all men; not to be entered into unadvisedly, but reverently, discreetly, and in the fear of God.

Man naturally seeks companionship. It is related of an Italian nobleman, whose married life was unhappy, that he took his only son when a mere boy, to the mountain fastnesses where he might never see a woman till he became a man. When twenty-one years of age, he brought him to the foot of the mountain to attend a banquet. There were many beautiful girls in attendance.

When he saw them, he asked: "Who are those creatures?" "My son," replied the father, "They are devils, black-eyed devils. I have had experience with one of them, and they are dangerous." The evening was spent in viewing many beautiful works of art. When they had completed the inspection, the father said to his son, "What would you rather have of all that you have seen?" The young man answered, "Father, I would rather have one of those black devils than all else in the world combined."

But the text warns us against being unequally yoked together.

1. *There ought to be, so far as possible, an equality in mental acquirements.* A man with fine literary taste will find a more congenial companion in a woman who is likewise intellectually inclined. They will live in the same intellectual world. But should there be a vast difference between their accomplishments, his world will not interest her, and hers will not please him.

2. *Be not unequally yoked morally, or with unbelievers.* Eliza Ambert, a young woman of Paris, discarded a gentleman to whom she was engaged because he ridiculed religion. When she gently reproved him, he said: "A man of the world can-

not be so old-fashioned as to regard God and religion." "Then," said Eliza, "from this moment sir, I cease to be yours. He who does not love and honor God can never love his wife constantly and sincerely."

A woman takes a great risk when she marries a bad man, hoping to reform him. *The Western Christian Advocate* says: "The execution of millionaire Arthur Duestrow, of St. Louis, for the murder of his wife and baby-boy should point a moral for all women contemplating marriage. Duestrow was the pampered son of wealth. He had a profession, but his riches left no incentive to practice it. Money brought good-cheer and gay fellowship, indulgence, and sin. Look at him when his wife accepted him—young, talented, handsome, social rank, rich, with an ample fixed income, but, "fast." She took her chances. She immersed herself in a conjugal hell. Her only escape was by the cruel bullets he fired into her shrieking body and through the head of her little boy! It seems plain enough now, her awful mistake. But, doubtless she was envied by many a girl in her set."

"Right now another Duestrow is paying court to a lovely girl, dazzling her with his wealth

and accomplishments. She knows his vices, but what are these to an assured place in society, supported by ample means? Wait, girl; long enough, at least, to look into the chamber of horrors, where the drunken brute, heedless of his wife's agonizing entreaties, empties his revolver into her body and into the head of their prattling babe. Such an ending is a hundredfold more probable than the husband's reformation and faithful love. Though he were a prince, and offered you the crown jewels, and yet were a drinker and debauchee, my dear girl, spurn him as you would a deadly viper!"

It is a false principle which condemns in woman what it condones in man. If she steps aside from virtue's path, the finger of scorn is pointed at her, while he who robbed her of her purity, walks the streets with unblushing face and goes his way unpunished.

"Yes, stone the woman—let the man go free!
Draw back your skirts lest they, perchance,
May touch her garments as she passes;
But to him put forth a willing hand
To clasp with his which lead her to destruction and
disgrace.
Shut up from her the sacred ways of toil that she no
more may win an

Honest meal; but ope to him all honorable Paths, where he may win distinction; Give to him fair, pressed-down measures of Life's sweetest joys. Pass her, O maiden, With a pure, proud face, if she put out A poor polluted palm; but lay thy hand in His on bridal day and swear to cling to him With wisely love and tender reverence. Trust him who led a sister woman To a fearful fate.

Yes, stone the woman—let the man go free! Let one soul suffer for the guilt of two— It is the doctrine of a hurried world, Too out of breath for holding balances Where nice distinctions and injustices Are calmly weighed. But ah, how will it be On that great day of fire and flame, When men shall stand before the one true Judge? Shall sex then make a difference in Sin? Shall he, the Searcher of the hidden Heart, in his eternal and divine decree Condemn the woman and forgive the man?"

3. *It may be said that it is generally best for those who are about equal in wealth to marry.* Many a man will marry a woman, not for love's sake, but for the sake of her pocket-book. He will doubtless regret it when she wants him to economize, reminding him in an unpleasant manner that her money is meeting expenses.

Sometimes a woman will marry a man for the sake of wearing a title, only to realize that the title is about all she does wear.

A young woman married a man, not for love, but for honor, thinking he was much older than herself. She was greatly disappointed when she found him to be ten years younger than she thought him to be. I suppose it occurred to her that it would take him that much longer to die.

There is one respect in which a man and woman who marry, should differ. I refer to disposition. A high-tempered man should seek an even-tempered woman. Two persons of very high temper married. They quarreled. When the storm had subsided, they sat by a blazing fire, he in one corner and she in the other. The wife observed a playful cat and friendly dog lying very contentedly on the hearth. She took in the situation and said:

"Old man, look at that cat and dog. They don't quarrel." To which he gravely replied: "No, but tie them together and you'll see the fur fly." It is sometimes more complimentary to let the audience make the application.

I wish now, in a more general way, to speak of some things which this relation demands; for although I have never been married, I may have learned a very few facts from observation.

It may be asked, "What is true marriage?" I

can find no better answer than this: The union of two hearts in the holiest bonds of love. After this union has been made, keep verdant love's altar. An aged woman who survived her husband after sixty years of married life, had this carved on his monument: "He was always my lover." You should always love your wife as tenderly as the day when, before God's altar, you promised to love her, comfort her, honor and keep her, in sickness and in health. Don't be afraid to tell her so, either.

"Amid the cares of married life,
In spite of toil and business strife,
If you value your sweet wife,
Tell her so!

Prove to her you don't forget
The bond to which your seal is set;
She's of life's sweets the sweetest yet—
Tell her so!

When days are dark and deeply blue,
She has her troubles same as you,
Show her that your love is true—
Tell her so!

In former days you praised her style,
And spent much time to win her smile;
'Tis just as well now worth your while—
Tell her so!

Don't act, if she has passed her prime,
As tho to please her were a crime!

If e'er you loved her now's the time—
Tell her so!

You are hers, and hers alone;
Well you know she's all your own;
Don't wait to 'carve it on a stone'—
Tell her so!"

This relation calls for much patient forbearance. A quarrelsome family became noted for harmony and good-will. When asked the reason the wife replied: "It is because we have two bears in the house—bear and forbear."

After half a century of married life, the Rev. Robert Newton said: "I know not that during the fifty years of our union an unkind word has ever passed between us."

Would to God such testimony were more universal! But how often feelings are wounded by unkind words.

"How many go forth in the morning
That never come home at night,
And hearts have broken,
For harsh words spoken,
That sorrow can ne'er set right.
We have careful thoughts for the stranger,
And smiles for the sometime guest,
But oft for our own
The bitter tone,
Tho we love our own the best.
Ah! lips with the curve impatient,

Ah! brow with that look of scorn,
'Twere a cruel fate,
Were the night too late
To undo the work of morn."

Shall I say that this relation demands prayer? Indeed it does. Why should not people pray over one of the greatest events of life? And yet young men and women rush into marriage as if it were a trivial affair, requiring little thought, to say nothing of prayer. Is it any wonder that so many unhappy unions occur? If we believe in God's guiding and directing hand in all the affairs of life, let us seek it in one of the most important epochs in human history.

Again, this is a relation for life. The contract is "Till death do us part." But notwithstanding this solemn covenant, the holy bonds are often put asunder in a divorce court. We need toning up on this subject. There are three thousand courts in the United States empowered to grant divorces and an average of forty thousand decrees granted annually. South Carolina is the only state in the Union in which divorces are not granted. While population in the United States was increasing sixty per cent., divorces increased one hundred and fifty-seven per cent. In 1870, the proportion of divorces to marriages was one to every six

hundred and sixty-nine; in 1880, one to every four hundred and eighty-one; while in 1890 it was one to every one hundred and eighty-five.

Of divorces granted within the last twenty years, sixty-five per cent. was granted to wives against husbands and thirty-five per cent. to husbands against wives. The leading grounds for divorce are as follows: Desertion 38.54 per cent., adultery 20.5 per cent., cruelty 15.7 per cent., drunkenness 4.2 per cent., neglect to provide 2.4 per cent., other causes 18.8 per cent.

Dr. J. M. Buckley says: "The condition of the public mind upon the subject of divorce is deplorable, and nowhere more so than in the United States. To assume that the State should allow but one cause is to assume what has never been proved, whatever the Scriptures may require the church to enforce. Several States, like New York, allow but one cause; some, but two or three. But so many allow such a number of alleged causes, some of which are vague, that it becomes a matter of caprice on the part of judges whether a decree shall be granted or not."

I plead for more faithfulness to this sacred relation, which is the only reminder of man's Eden home, and the glories of his lost estate.

I think I may safely say that marriage always makes or mars. That was a high compliment to a wife's power, when Senator John M. Thurston, of Nebraska, said with reference to the death of his wife: "In the cable that moored me to life and hope the strongest strands are broken." Such a woman will refine and soothe man's life, irradiate his home and re-enforce him when discouraged. "The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her. She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life. She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness. Her price is far above rubies."

We cannot bound her sphere or limit her possibilities.

"They talk about a woman's sphere
As tho it had a limit.
There's not a place in earth or heaven
There's not a task to mankind given
There's not a blessing or a woe,
There's not a whispered 'yes' or 'no';
There's not a life, a death, a birth
There's not a feather's weight of worth
Without a woman in it."

But if John Wesley were here, he could probably tell us that a wife's power to torment, when she is so disposed, is as great as her influence to bless. He suffered enough at her hands, how-

ever, without having the story of his unhappy married life rehearsed to present or future generations.

The New York Times gives an interesting catalogue of women who should never marry. Here are some of them: The woman who proudly declares that she cannot hem a pocket handkerchief, never made up a bed in her life, and adds, with a simper, that she has "been in society ever since she was sixteen."

The woman who would rather nurse a pug dog than a baby.

The woman who wants to re-furnish her house every Spring.

The woman who thinks men are angels or demigods.

The woman who would rather die than wear a bonnet two seasons old.

The woman who thinks the cook or nurse can keep house.

The woman who thinks more for the style of her cloak than for the comfort of her children.

What has been said above in regard to a wife's power for good or evil, may also apply to a husband.

What more shall I say to this large audience of

young people? To you young women, who may yet enter such a sacred relation, this shall be my final word: May one of your brightest and happiest days be when you shall stand before God's altar and swear allegiance to some worthy man. He may never be great, but he can be noble, and I pray God he may be a good man. For you young men, I can cherish no better wish, than that your married life may be like that of Lord Laurence. After many years of happy wedlock, he lay dying. His wife and daughter were standing by his bedside. They talked over the happy days gone by, when the wife stepped out of the room for a moment. Wistfully the eyes of the dying man followed her. Then turning his anxious face to his beloved daughter, he asked: "Where has your mother gone?" "She has gone out for something," said the daughter. "Papa, it seems that you cannot bear to have her out of your sight." The father made answer: "That, my daughter, is why I married her."

"There's a bliss beyond all that the minstrel has told.
Where two that are linked in one heavenly tie,
With heart never changing and brow never cold,
Love on through all ill, and love on till they die."

X.

CHRIST'S LAST COMMAND.

"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."—Mark xvi, 15.

Christ appeared to the disciples after the resurrection and upbraided them because of their hardness of heart and unbelief. Then before His ascension He gave His last command in the words of the text: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."

Loyalty and love will not permit us to disregard it. "Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you." "If ye love me keep my commandments."

I.

The Gospel is the divinely given remedy for this world's salvation.

There is no hope in any other remedy. Confucius in some respects was a great teacher. For instance, the disregard of law among his countrymen, induced him to examine the ancient writings and, being satisfied as to their authority to

check existing evils, he gathered pupils around him that he might impress them with obedience to the law. He considered that a happy tranquility could be secured by maintaining the sacredness of the universal obligations of society. He also laid special emphasis upon the care and education of the young. But as a spiritual adviser, what has he to say to the longings of a deathless soul? He seldom refers to human destiny. He says: "To give one's self earnestly to the duties due to men, and while respecting spiritual beings, to keep aloof from them, may be called wisdom."

Turn to Mohammedanism. Its founder used the sword for the propagation of his religion. He stood by, and watched in silence, the massacre of six hundred Jews in one day. Christ is acknowledged to be the greatest prophet next to Mohammed, but only a man. The fundamental article of religion is, "There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is his prophet."

What can Buddhism do to alleviate sin and suffering? It is the religion of five hundred millions of people, but it has no God, no heaven, no prayer, no pardon, no future life. From beginning to end it is without one ray of hope.

We might examine other religious systems only to find that when their subjects ask for bread they are given a stone. "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." He opens a path through murky waters. He rains manna from heaven. He cleaves the rock in life's burning desert. He makes rippling streams murmur in the thirsty land. "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." It is only when men catch a vision of the Christ, that hope dawns, that joy inspires and that the heart sings. Guilty man was like a broken ship in a storm, no haven in view, no life boat in sight, when God marked his signal of distress, and out of the opened heavens sent One, who, with the strength of His mighty arm, beat back the angry waves, pushed His wondrous cross within reach of the sinking soul, rescued it from the whelming flood, and brought it safe to land.

II.

I invite your attention in the second place, to the triumphs of the Gospel. The Thracians had a very striking emblem to express the power of God. It was a sun with three beams—one shining upon a sea of ice, and melting it; another

upon a rock, and dissolving it; while the third shone upon a dead man, restoring him to life. How beautifully this harmonizes with the Gospel sun shining upon the hardest heart melting it into obedience, and raising the dead in trespasses and sins to a life of power and holiness. It cheers the broken-hearted. It reconciles the sufferer to his cross. It saves Mary Magdalene, and converts Saul of Tarsus. This Gospel, preached by Paul in the Mamertine prison, broke the power of the Roman Empire and gave us Italy for Christ. Proclaimed by the eloquent lips of Irenæus, it dissipated the darkness of Gaul, and France was brought into the Shepherd's fold. So it will, in process of time, make itself felt in all kingdoms of the earth. All Christendom should be thrilled with joy. There are twenty-five thousand converts in India every year under Methodist missions, about the same number under Baptist missions, and seventy-five thousand in that one country under all missions, and the day is dawning when Hindooism will vanish before the light of the Gospel. Japan is on her knees, and China is crying for mercy. What a day that will be when all the earth shall sing:

"Amazing grace! how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me;
I once was lost, but now am found;
Was blind, but now I see."

The total results of missionary effort are thus given by Dennis in his "Foreign Missions after a Century:"

"The Bible has been wholly translated into ninety languages and partially into two hundred and thirty more. Ten thousand missionaries are engaged in the work with forty-four thousand native helpers. Over one million have been gathered into the church, and four millions brought beneath the influence of the Gospel. Seventy thousand pupils have been taught in higher institutions of learning and six hundred and eight thousand in village mission schools.

"Missionary work, however, cannot be wholly measured by statistics. The Gospel is the advance-guard of civilization. Wherever it goes—and it goes everywhere—its heralds stand beneath the gleam of the Polar Star and under the splendor of the Southern Cross—it is the "power of God unto salvation;" salvation not only from sin, but from ignorance, from cruelty, from sickness, from oppression, from despair. All over the world, as

the result of missions, the earth is fairer, the air is purer, the sky is nearer."

"The world sits at the feet of Christ,
 Unknowing, blind and uncooled.
It yet shall touch His garment's fold
And feel the Heavenly alchemist
 Transform its very dust to gold."

III.

Our duty is to preach it to every creature. As disciples, we have been taught by Christ. This is preliminary to our mission. "As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world." Go ye into all the world! If not in person, go ye in prayer and giving. In obedience to this last command, many have gone, others are on the way. The first to go out from our church was Melville Beveridge Cox. He was appointed to Liberia May 7, 1832. That day he sent a letter to a friend saying: "I thirst to be on my way. I pray that God may fit my soul and body for the duties before me; that God may go with me there. I have no lingering fear. A grave in Africa shall be sweet to me, if He sustain me." Before sailing he visited Wesleyan University, Middletown, Conn., and addressed the students with great earnestness. To one of them he said:

"If I die in Africa you must come over and write my epitaph." The student replied: "I will, but what shall I write?"

"Write," said Cox, "let a thousand fall before Africa be given up!"

He reached Monrovia March 7, 1833. For three months he labored zealously for the Master. Then African fever seized him, and he passed to his reward Sunday morning, July 21, exclaiming with his last breath, "Lord Jesus, come quickly!"

The dust of many another hero of the cross lies buried beyond the sea. Bishop Kingsley's body sleeps in the lands of Syria, Bishop Coke's in the trackless depths of the Indian ocean, while Bishop Wiley found a grave in China. Time will not permit me to mention others. I must, however, address this burning question to each one of you: What shall be *your* response?

In time of war loyal people are all at the front. The wife goes by proxy when she sends her husband; the mother, when she commissions her boy to go.

And whose heart has not been thrilled by the story of valor displayed on the field of death? I remember to have read of such an instance during the recent war with Spain. The hero was

Allen K. Capron, who commanded troop L, of the Rough Riders, in the assault upon the Spanish outposts. None but those who passed through it will ever know the hardships of that morning march before the fight. All was new to the Americans. After the transports landed they spent one night of broken sleep on the heated beach, and with day-break came the order to march into the mountains and drive back the Spanish outpost which the Cubans reported to be in the thicket only a few miles from the coast. They marched up the mountain. The tropical sun poured down upon them. Their feet were bleeding. Their hands were torn by cactus thorns. Their lips were parched with thirst. On they went.

Then like a sudden dash of rain came the storm of Spanish bullets. In every direction Mauser rifles cracked and the thicket was ablaze with death flashes. Then Captain Capron and his men dashed forward. It was an awful hour. They fought like demons. The brave Captain stood erect in the act of leveling his pistol to fire when he was struck by a bullet and the revolver dropped from his hand. He sank to the ground, his left hand pressed to his side, but his

right hand still pointing toward the enemy. Several comrades gathered about him, but he motioned them away, saying:

"Don't mind me, boys; go into the thicket." While dying the brave man heard his men pushing on to the fight, and while the light was fast fading from his eyes, he saw the Spaniards retreating down the hill toward Santiago.

And now the application. If men so bravely and willingly surrender life in the cause of humanity to relieve bodily suffering, what shall we do to break the shackles that bind captive souls? Touched by the wail that comes from over the seas, shall we refuse to hasten with eager feet and tell the story of God's redeeming love? Oh, no! no! I cannot believe it.

"Shall we whose souls are lighted,
With wisdom from on high,
Shall we to men benighted
The lamp of life deny?
Salvation! O salvation!
The joyful sound proclaim,
Till earth's remotest nation
Has learned Messiah's name."

Leonidas, the brave Grecian general, when entering the battle of Thermopylae, uttered this vow: "Witness ye rocks and hills, I swear Greece shall be free."

The recorded vow of every soldier of the cross should be: Witness, oh God! the nations of the earth shall be free—free from the power and thralldom of sin.

The cry is often raised that missionary societies are extravagant; that "it costs a dollar to send a dollar."

That I might show the falsity of this statement, I wrote to the Bureau of Social Economics, St. Louis, Mo., of which I am a member, asking for a tabulated statement showing what per cent. of every dollar contributed for foreign missionary purposes is sent abroad. Here is the reply: "Methodist church, ninety-five per cent.; Baptist church, ninety-four and one-half per cent.; Congregational church, ninety-two per cent.; Presbyterian church, ninety-four per cent.; Reformed church, ninety-five per cent."

I am convinced that we are not measuring up to our ability and obligation in missionary effort. All the protestant churches of the United States give annually to foreign missions, \$11,250,000.

This is but an average per capita contribution of thirty-two cents.

The average cost of every heathen conversion is \$135.97. Accordingly, it requires the contri-

butions of four hundred and twenty-five persons to save one soul.

If the Methodist Episcopal Church should succeed in gathering a million and a quarter every year for the Missionary Society, it would only represent about forty-five cents for each member, or an average of less than one cent a week. Amazing parsimony! May the love of Christ constrain us to greater faithfulness to His last command! For, as Dr. Carroll says: "If a man truly loves Christ, he must love His cause, and what is His cause but the saving of man? There is nothing in the universe of half so much value as men. God indicated His estimate of their value when He gave His only begotten Son to redeem them. It was His will that the glorious race of martyrs should arise on Calvary and be perpetuated through the centuries that we might come to a knowledge of the Way, the Truth, and the Life. The riches of grace which we enjoy have been accumulated for us through blood, and sweat, and tears and continuous sacrifice. How can we be indifferent Christians? Where is our sense of gratitude? Where is our love for God? Where is our love for man? Where is our spirit of sacrifice? Have we no care how the campaign for Christ goes in the

world? Shall we withhold not only ourselves, but our means from the service of the King against the forces of evil? Are we to receive all and give nothing? Surely, we dare not thus rob God!"

I read an incident in the *Christian Observer*, which stirred my very soul. A minister had made an earnest appeal for help in the support of a little mission church among the mountains. The response was not very generous. In the audience sat a little crippled girl. She had hobbled out to church on her crutch. When the man who was taking up the scanty collection came to where she was sitting, she extended to him the polished crutch. He carried it forward to the minister who took it saying: "Do you see it my people; little crippled Maggie's crutch—all she has to make life comfortable? Does anyone want to contribute to the mission cause the amount of money this crutch would bring, and give it back to the child who is so helpless without it?"

The sublimity of the child's renunciation electrified the audience and the subscribing went on, until six hundred dollars were piled upon the table.

Then they brought the crutch back to Maggie, telling her she had preached the greatest missionary sermon the church had ever heard.

"I dare not work my soul to save,
That work my Lord has done;
But I will work like any slave,
For love of God's dear Son."

When a gentleman had related to a Quaker a tale of terrible suffering, he concluded by saying:

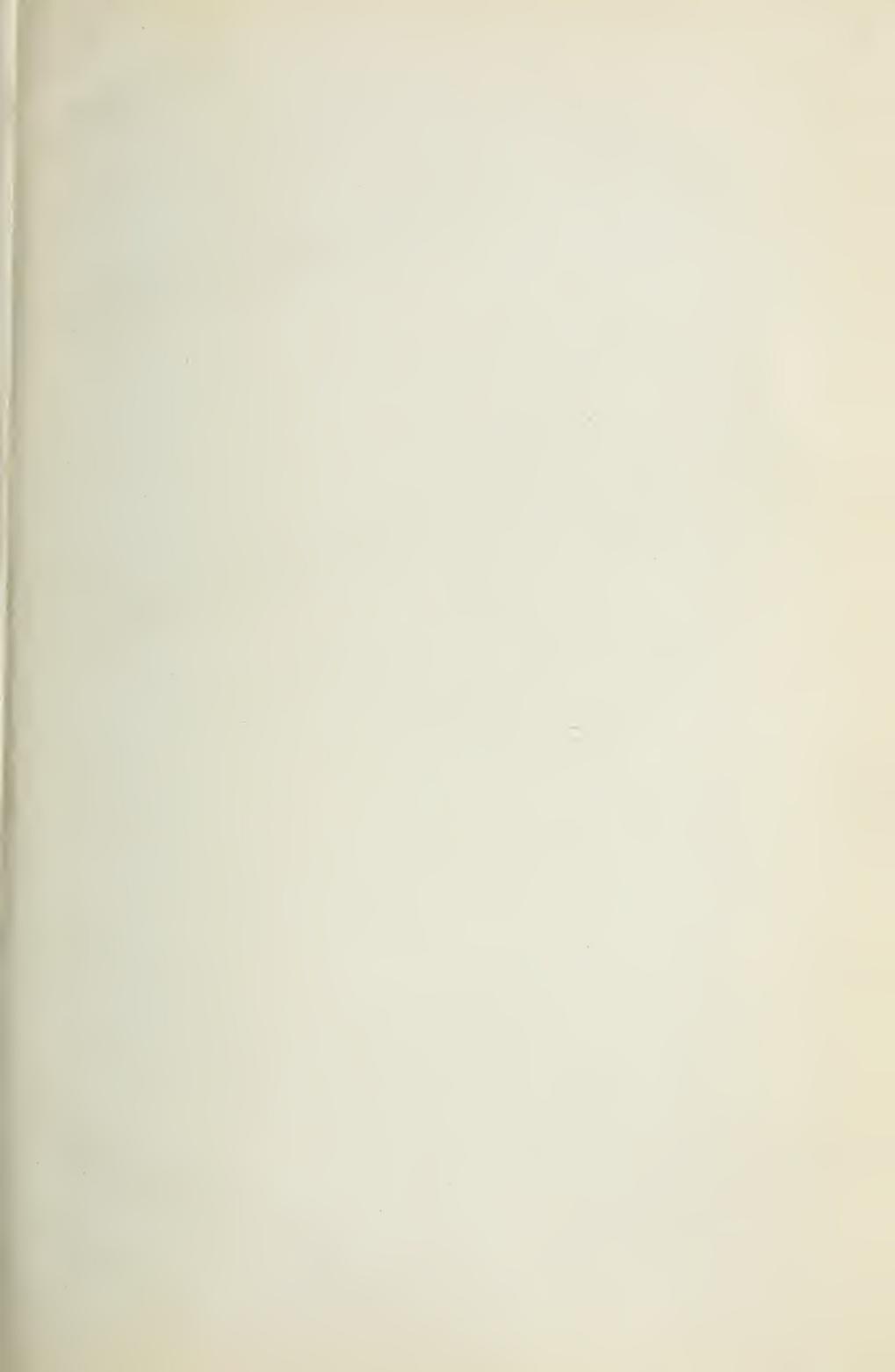
"I could not but feel for him."

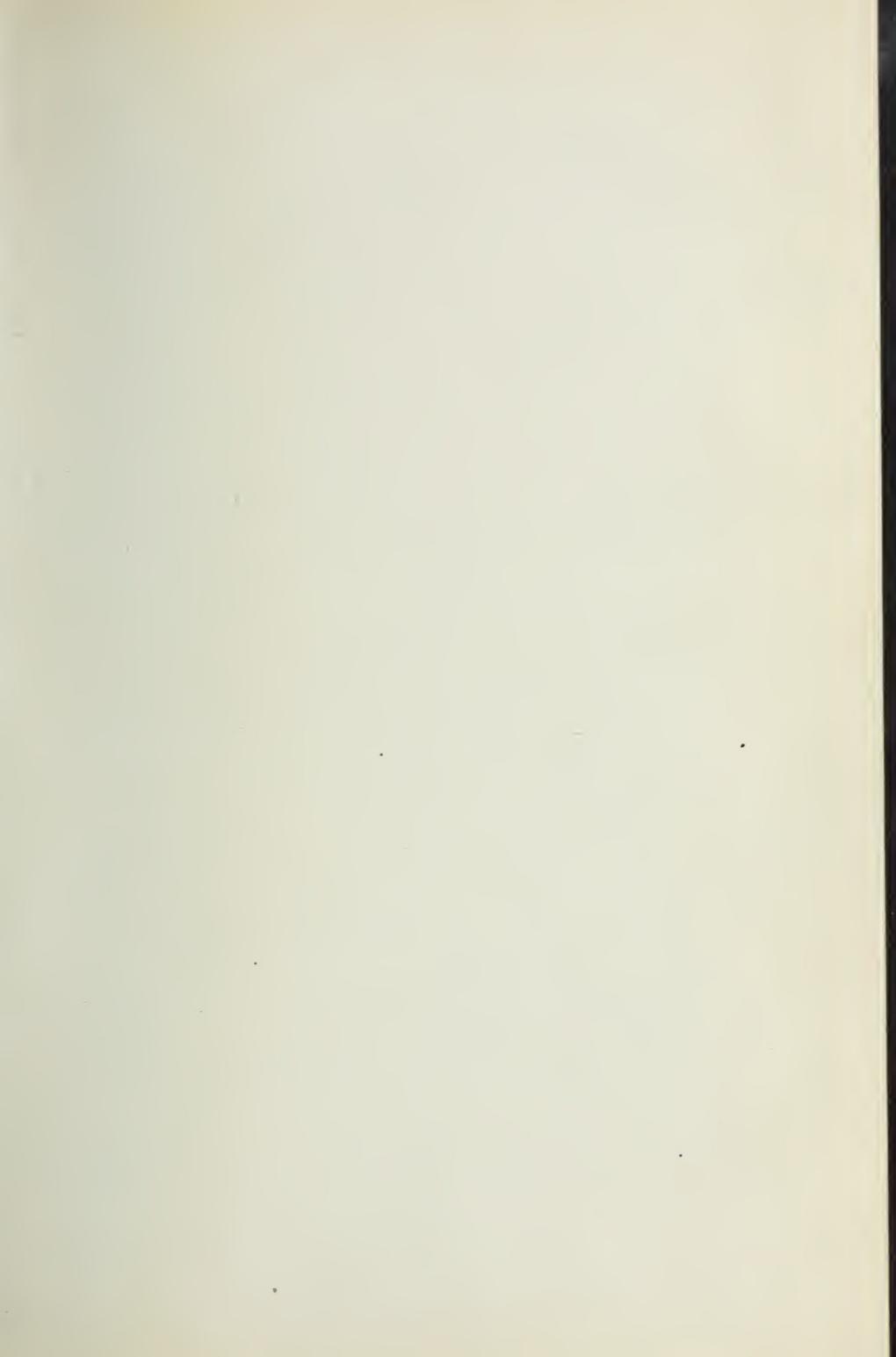
The Quaker replied:

"Verily, friend, thou didst right in that thou didst feel for him; but didst thou feel in the right place? Didst thou feel in thy pocket?"

We feel for those who are in darkness and sin, but what is needed is, to have feeling transmitted into giving.

Just now a Divine hand is opening doors in Porto Rico, Cuba, and the Philippine Islands. Let the blessed work be undertaken. Go, thrust in thy sickle. And blessed be God for the privilege. A Spartan, who had distinguished himself in battle, was wounded. The king bent over him and asked, "What wilt thou? A wreath, a noble title? What wilt thou?" He replied, "Let me march, O king, in the van of the army." O comrades of the blood-red cross, there is no higher honor than this—marching in the van of the army!





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